



Strengthening Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in Policy and Practice

Global FAO C&I Expert Workshop, FAO Rome, Italy 15-16 January, 2015

Executive Summary

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) implements the project “Strengthening C&I for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and their use in policy and practice” (2014-2015). In the context of this project, FAO organized a global expert workshop to discuss the interim results of the project, in particular on the experiences, needs and potential for main uses of C&Is and work on further developing harmonized indicators for monitoring and reporting. The principal aim of the workshop was to provide guidance on the way forward towards a widely shared vision and roadmap for strengthening the use of C&I in policy and practice.

The workshop brought together 46 experts working with C&I at global, regional, national and practice levels. The experts underlined that forest indicators are a crucial tool to promote and demonstrate sustainability, from global to practice levels, and more work is necessary now to make use of their full potential. The workshop provided operational guidance on the way forward towards a widely shared vision and roadmap towards strengthening the use of C&I in policy and practice at different levels, and how to further contribute to harmonized forest-related monitoring and reporting. The experts identified the following three areas of work as crucial:

- strengthen effective monitoring and reporting of forest contributions to Sustainable Development Goals and targets, UNFF and relevant Rio Conventions;
- further developing practical C&I tools that provide added value for different user groups and purposes, promoting sustainable practices;
- contribute to developing integrated sustainability assessments across different land uses.

The experts also provided recommendations on concrete next steps to promote C&I and forest indicators in 2015, which is a key year for forests:

- Regional C&I Workshops in Latin America, Africa and Asia (spring 2015)
- UNFF11 and post-2015 arrangements on forests (May 2015)
- XIV World Forestry Congress (September 2015)
- Post-2015 development agenda - SDGs (September 2015)

More information on criteria and indicators for SFM, the project and the expert workshop can be found at: www.fao.org/forestry/ci/en/

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I. Welcome and opening of the C&I expert workshop

The Workshop was opened by Mr. Eduardo Mansur, the Director of the FAO Forest Assessment, Management and Conservation Division, FAO Forestry Department. He welcomed the participants and highlighted that the development and further use of C&I can build on 20 years of substantive work and experiences with their use in practice. He emphasized the high potential of C&I to promote sustainability at the different levels, public and private also in the future, pointing out the window of opportunity of 2015 as a key year for the forests:

- post-2015 forest arrangements (UNFF¹ & CPF²)
- post-2015 development agenda (SDGs³)
- post-2015 climate change agreement

The opening of the workshop was followed by an introduction of the participants (46, of which 15 attended through Vide Conference or Skype). The participants, contributing in their personal technical expert capacity, included members of or experts closely working with secretariats of all active regional C&I processes (ITTO⁴, ACTO⁵, Montréal Process, FOREST EUROPE, TPS LFCC⁶) and other major regional

¹ United Nations Forum on Forests

² Collaborative Partnership on Forests

³ Sustainable Development Goals

⁴ International Tropical Timber Organization

⁵ Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization

⁶ Tehran Process Secretariat for Low Forest Cover Countries

forest policy processes (COMIFAC⁷, ECOWAS⁸, ASEAN⁹), of global forest-related conventions and processes (UNFF, UNCCD¹⁰, CBD¹¹, UNFCCC/UNREDD¹²), other global users of forest indicators (SDG, FAO Forest Resources Assessment), experts and consultants on national level use of C&I in different regions (Latin America, Africa, Asia), and bodies working with C&I at local and management practice levels (e.g. FSC¹³, PEFC¹⁴, FFF¹⁵, IMFN¹⁶). The list of participants can be found in Annex 2.

II. Introduction to the C&I expert workshop and the C&I project

The session was opened by adopting the agenda of the workshop (see Annex 1), followed by an introduction to the FAO C&I project, its objectives and expected outcomes. The project aims to:

- Strengthen the use of C&I as a tool in policy dialogue, planning, decision making as well as in monitoring and reporting at national, regional and global levels and in forest management practice;
- Further develop and harmonize indicators of SFM, in particular strengthening socio-economic and governance aspects.

The expected outcome is a broad agreement at technical level amongst key bodies and C&I processes on a common vision on the further promotion and use of forest indicators as tool for strengthening SFM and a joint understanding on a roadmap for implementation by key partners, and further elaborated and harmonized indicators of SFM, in particular addressing weaknesses related to socio-economic and governance aspects.

Ewald Rametsteiner, Team Leader of the Forest Governance Team of the Forestry Department and project leader, presented the initial proposed possible elements for a vision on strengthening C&I use, and possible elements for a roadmap for action, based on a paper prepared by Caswell (2014)¹⁷ and a stock taking of past and current use of C&I. The C&I vision elements comprise six major uses of C&I or sustainability forest indicators as a framework for:

- a) Policy dialogue, communication and planning
- b) Guiding implementation of policies, plans and programmes
- c) Guiding and structuring data collection and monitoring
- d) Guiding and structuring sustainability assessments and reporting, incl. on cross-sectoral land use

⁷ Central African Forest Commission

⁸ Economic Community Of West African States

⁹ Association of South East Asian Nations

¹⁰ United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

¹¹ The Convention on Biological Diversity

¹² United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change/United Nations Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation Programme

¹³ Forest Stewardship Council

¹⁴ Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification

¹⁵ Forest and Farm Facility

¹⁶ International Model Forest Network

¹⁷ "Current and potential applications of C&I, proposing possible elements for a vision and roadmap to further develop and promote C&I / forest indicators for enhanced use in policy and practice, and recommendations of next steps" (Caswell, S., 2014. FAO Background Paper).

- e) Guiding forest management practice
- f) Developing and applying sustainability certification principles, standards and indicators

The roadmap elements/action areas to strengthen the six main uses of C&I and forest indicators include:

- a) C&I vision and roadmap – promoting uptake and implementation
- b) Capacity building and knowledge management on C&I
- c) Harmonization and indicator development
- d) Communication and outreach on C&I
- e) Technical and financial support to adapt and apply C&I

These main uses and action areas address bodies working at different geographical levels:

- Global (CPF members, SDG indicator development related bodies);
- Regional (key regional forest-related bodies incl. C&I processes);
- National (governmental, non-governmental);
- Practice/FMU level (community forestry orgs, certification bodies, private sector, etc.).

The ensuing discussion centered around the general role and purpose of C&I in promoting sustainable forest management. It was pointed out that, to be adopted and used, C&I or forest indicators need to be effective as tools to promote and demonstrate sustainability, hence enhance sustainability performance and increase accountability. In order to be adopted by potential users at different geographical levels, they need to provide added value to the respective user groups (from governmental or inter-governmental administrations to small scale operators). The experts pointed out that this requires that:

- the potential and added value of C&I or forest sustainability indicators as tools for a specific user group is communicated and demonstrated;
- the C&I or forest indicator sets are adapted for each user group and specific purpose;
- relevant stakeholders and users are involved in the process of adaptation.

The experts underlined that it is key to involve in particular those user groups whose decisions affect forests and sustainability most (investors, smallholders, decision makers over broader land use). They also acknowledged the challenges involved to deal adequately and flexibly with the many dimensions involved in promoting and demonstrating sustainability at different levels.

III. Strengthening C&I and their use at the global level

The session on global level use focused on the international arrangement on forests (IAF) and its on-going review, and the potential future role of C&I and forest sustainability indicators in the context of post-2015 UNFF and CPF arrangements in the context of the SDGs. Global level use of C&I was further discussed in the session on SDGs and cross-sectoral use of C&I (see chapter VII below).

Stephanie Caswell, FAO consultant, introduced the topic and provided a comprehensive overview of current discussions on the IAF review and insights into potential options for strengthening the use of C&I or forest indicators in the global context. The subsequent discussion centred on the following:

- Possible outcomes of UNFF11 (May 2015) relevant to C&I, including indicators on the Global Objectives on Forests (GOF), their relation to forest-related SDGs and targets, institutional arrangements for effective promotion of SFM through the “Forest Instrument”, and related monitoring, assessing and reporting post-2015;
- The needs and potential for further harmonizing forest-related reporting to different Rio Conventions (UNCCD, CBD, UNFCCC);
- The potential of building on the “Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire” and the CPF “Task Force on Strengthening Forest-related Reporting” to strengthen harmonized monitoring and reporting, including through the up-coming Forest Resources Assessment 2020.

Overall, experts noted the increasing focus on more performance-based (measurable) results in policy processes and a growing need for more accountability by policy makers, for which indicators are a suitable tool. This increases the potential to strengthen the use of C&I and forest indicators, if these are adequately adapted to fit respective contexts and needs.

Experts agreed about the potential to enhance the use of C&I (or relevant sets of forest indicators) to contribute to implementation of future GOF and the Forest Instrument as a whole. This might require further development and adaptation of existing C&I sets to be able to measure and subsequently report on GOF and/or related targets, which in turn ideally should be consistent with SDG targets and related indicators. To cover GOFs it would require further work on improving indicators and data on socio-economic and governance aspects, which tend to be weak in current C&I sets. Even though there is no globally agreed definition for “sustainable forest management”, the emerging need to report on sustainable forest management, finance and governance aspects in the context of the SDGs, experts suggested that this provides an opportunity to overcome past obstacles with regard to a single SFM indicator (see also chapter VII).

Experts agreed about the need and potential to strengthen further collaboration on streamlining forest-related reporting at global levels, including UNFF, CBD and UNCCD. They recommended concrete action on further harmonizing reporting timelines, formats, technical infrastructure to access and use data and information compiled, and to promote participatory verification of information submitted and broad use at country levels. A global forest indicator partnership, building on the existing CPF Task Force and the arrangements in place for the Collaborative Forest Resources Questionnaire (CFRQ) was seen as good starting points to provide the institutional basis for the work.

Main recommendations provided by the experts in relation to the vision and roadmap elements on the contribution and use of C&I in the post-2015 international arrangements (“Forest Instrument”, UNFF and CPF) at global levels included:

- Align indicators on Global Objectives on Forests and related targets as consistently as possible to SDG target indicators, including on “sustainable forest management”;

- Integrate indicators needed for global level reporting for (SDGs and) the GOF into a global forest indicator set (C&I set) for subsequent data collection and compilation, building on and expanding the “global forest resources questionnaire” used for FRA2015, with a view to cover global level forest-related reporting needs;
- Further work on strengthening collaboration on data collection, data management, data sharing and accessibility of data, and on harmonizing reporting on the Forest Instrument and to the main forest-related global conventions (CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC), based on a global forest indicator set (C&I set);
- Promote the establishment of an institutional framework for collaboration amongst key global and regional bodies to that end, building on the CPF Task Force on Streamlining Forest-related Reporting, e.g. through establishing a Global Forest Indicator Partnership.

With regard to concrete next steps for the project, the experts recommended

- Take action to technically support the elaboration of proposal for forest indicators for SDG targets and GOFs, including indicators on sustainable forest management (GOF1), on socio-economic benefits (GOF2), finance (GOF4), and governance aspects (see Chapter VII on actions related to SDGs);
- Take up the global level use of C&I (International Arrangements on Forests and SDGs) in the discussions of the Regional C&I Workshops to be held in Latin America, Africa and Asia in spring 2015;
- Organize a side event at UNFF11 in May 2015 together with regional C&I processes and CPF members to present the results of the Regional C&I Workshops, in particular the role of C&I and MAR in the post-2015 IAF, and to discuss possible institutional arrangements such as a Global Forest Indicator Partnership;
- Organize a session at the XIV. World Forestry Congress 2015 in September 2015 with a focus on the development and use of a global forest indicator (C&I) set for monitoring, assessment and reporting, and related institutional arrangements.

IV. Strengthen C&I and their use at regional levels

The session on regional level use focused on the use of C&I by regional bodies, including major experiences, lessons learned, associated challenges and the future use and potential of using sustainability indicator sets by bodies at regional levels.

A joint presentation was held based on the work of regional consultants that undertook a stock-taking and needs assessment for regional bodies in Latin America, Africa and Asia, integrating submissions made prior to the workshop by ITTO, the Montréal Process, FOREST EUROPE, ACTO, COMIFAC, ECOWAS, as well as representatives from other forest relevant (cross-sectoral) initiatives and processes, such as

UNCCD, CBD, and UNFF. Following the presentation, the representatives of the regional C&I processes or experts working closely with them (COMIFAC, ASEAN) provided complementary statements and comments.

The discussion on the session topic showed that C&I is a key tool for systematic and continuous data collection, monitoring and international reporting on the state of forests and forest management in the different regions, which will likely remain a main use of C&I. With regard to future needs and potential for enhanced use of C&I at regional level and related challenges, participants raised a number of points and offered the following recommendations:

- Regional C&I processes have considerable experiences in using C&I for policy dialogue, communication and reporting (“State of Forests” report and other); these lessons are important to share amongst regional bodies. Regional C&I processes have also successfully collaborated in the context of further harmonizing global level reporting (CFRQ/FRA2015), and there seems a clear merit to further build on this experience in the future (see chapter III on global level use).
- Regional bodies including regional C&I processes provide an important link between the global and national levels. While regional C&I sets need to fit specific regional policy, monitoring and reporting needs, these should consider changes in indicators at global levels in the context of work related to SDG target and GOF indicators. This includes better coverage of people aspects (socio-economic and governance).
- To enhance the use of C&I at regional levels, there is a need to be able to concretely demonstrate the added value/benefit of using C&I for the specific main uses (policy dialogue, developing strategies or programmes, communication and advocacy, monitoring and reporting), and there is a need to enhance dialogue and sharing of experiences with specific potential users (including regional bodies, regional networks of research and education bodies). Participants pointed out that, while many stakeholder groups were often involved in the past, still more efforts are needed at regional levels to reach out to key bodies representing forest investors, the private sector and forest industry, and in particular community groups and indigenous peoples.
- One major use of C&I has been to help shape policy dialogue, involving different stakeholders in a process aiming to strengthen sustainability of forests and benefits they provide. Participants emphasized that there is still a strong need to further strengthen communication on forest and sustainability aspects, and underlined the need to be short, clear, and client-oriented (rather than aiming to communicate on all C&I). C&I were seen as an excellent tool to provide more detailed evidence and context, and hence credibility.
- Cross-sectoral issues are a key and recurrent topic in which regional bodies need to engage. In many cases forest C&Is and the experiences made in developing and using them has served bodies working on sustainability indicators in other sectors or cross-sectoral issues. In terms of enhancing co-ordination and collaboration, experience has also shown that it can be more effective to focus on a few key forest indicators of joint interest, rather than many. There are

particularly frequent links to initiatives working on indicators related to forest law enforcement, governance and trade (FLEGT), environmental safeguards in REDD+¹⁸ as well as agriculture and broader land use management. Moreover, regional collaboration can also be strengthened through better involving focal points of different forest-related conventions in the region (see also Session VII on cross-sectoral aspects).

- Capacity building and knowledge management was one of the needs raised by the participants, highlighting the need to provide opportunities for exchange of information, cross-learning (e.g. through C&I country focal points), sharing good practices, development of new data collection and management methods, training and education of regional and national C&I experts.

With regard to concrete next steps for the project, the experts recommended

- Involve regional C&I process secretariats and other regional bodies in the organization of the Regional C&I Workshops to be held in Latin America, Africa and Asia in spring 2015 and discuss regional level use of C&I;
- Involve regional C&I process secretariats and other regional bodies in the organization of a side event at UNFF11 in May 2015 to present the results of the Regional C&I Workshops and to discuss the role regional C&I processes in the post-2015 arrangements and related possible institutional arrangements (CPF Global Forest Indicator Partnership or other);
- Involve regional C&I process secretariats and other regional bodies in organizing a session at the XIV. World Forestry Congress 2015 in September 2015, with a view to discussing and agreeing on joint follow-up to UNFF11 (joint vision on C&I and roadmap).

V. Strengthening C&I and their use at national level (Africa, Asia and Latin America)

The session on the national level use focused on the use of C&I by governments and non-governmental bodies at national and sub-national (provincial, regions) levels and related major experiences, lessons learned associated challenges as well as future use and potential of sustainability indicator at these levels.

A joint presentation was held based on the work of regional consultants that undertook a stock-taking and needs assessment of national governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and users of C&I in Latin America, Africa and Asia. The results show that C&I have been used in a variety of ways in the different countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, across the six main uses of C&I (see chapter II of the report). This includes policy dialogue and communication, planning and guiding implementation, data collection and monitoring, reporting, and forest certification.

¹⁸ Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation

The experiences shared in the ensuing discussions indicated that uptake of C&I in national contexts by forest administrations and other bodies has considerably fluctuated with the presence or absence of international support for national level use (including ITTO, FAO and others). Many administrations that might find added value in using C&I more broadly seem to be most frequently exposed to C&I when the government is requested to fill in questionnaires by regional or global bodies. There are cases where this task is delegated to a single officer, without means or incentives to engage with a large number of bodies and stakeholders.

Quite a number of countries (e.g. 8 countries in the ASEAN region) have taken steps to adapt regional or global C&I sets to national contexts, policies and user requirements, including for national reporting. Participants expressed the opinion that the use of C&I at national level could potentially be considerably strengthened if the added value of using them for different concrete purposes (see main uses of C&I, chapter II) can be clearly demonstrated, and easy to use tools can be developed, jointly with the respective users. This would help address some of the critical bottleneck factors that prevent more broad use of C&I at national levels, including cost of data collection, data quality and availability, lack of resources and capacities and lack of adequate institutional coordination.

On the basis of the discussion and given the potential of C&I to promote sustainability of forests and in forestry in countries, the participants made the following recommendations:

- Promote further up-take of countries of C&I as a framework for policy dialogue and communication on forest and sustainability aspects to stakeholders and other sectors;
- Further institutionalize C&I as a framework to promote sustainability and for demonstrating progress, including through policies, strategies and legal frameworks, and by strengthening capacities of forest administrative bodies to use C&I;
- Promote the adaptation of C&I sets to correspond to national policy priorities and contexts. C&I can help in implementing strategies and programmes, but need to be practicable and easily applicable in order to be taken up and used by forest administrations. This often entails a considerable reduction and simplification of indicators to be used, and the development and demonstration of easy to use tools, involving the users of such tools;
- Promote the use of C&I for monitoring and reporting, including in further developing and enhancing the use of C&I in national forest monitoring and forest information systems. Make better use of and involve different bodies and stakeholders to validate information, improving quality and reliability as well as access to and use of such information;
- Engage with different governmental and non-governmental bodies working on forest or sustainability related indicators across different sectors, including FLEGT, REDD+, environment, biodiversity, sustainable land use, energy, agriculture and others (including through involving national focal points of forest-related Rio Conventions such as CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC);
- Promote exchange of information and experiences by different bodies, involve research and education organizations, and identify means (including financial resources) to build capacities of key bodies addressing sustainability issues affecting forests and the benefits they provide.

With regard to concrete next steps for the project, the experts recommended

- Further compile C&I tools for main uses of C&I as used in practice by forest administration and national stakeholders (other than in monitoring and reporting), document concrete experiences and identify the value added to users, and lessons to share;
- Discuss practical examples of main uses of C&I at the Regional C&I Workshops to be held in Latin America, Africa and Asia in spring 2015, with a view to better understand the value added proposition of available C&I applications to different specific user groups;
- Present results at a session at the XIV. World Forestry Congress 2015 in September 2015.

VI. Strengthening C&I and their use at local levels

The session on local level use focused on the use of C&I by forest certification bodies, the private sector, investors in different forms of land use (agriculture, energy, land use, mining, and infrastructure), community forestry and producer organizations and other groups, including indigenous peoples. Promoting sustainability in practice is to a large part about changing the values, perception, interests, decisions and practices of individuals managing or cutting forests and trees. In this context it was noted that the private forest sector industry and investors were not represented in the C&I expert workshop. As in the other sessions, the objective was to discuss major experiences with using C&I at local and practice levels, lessons learned, associated challenges and the future use and potential of using sustainability indicators at this level.

A joint presentation was held based on the work of regional consultants that undertook a stock-taking and needs assessment amongst non-governmental stakeholders in Latin America, Africa and Asia, the feedback from a survey amongst PEFC and FSC focal points and forestry producer organization associations (IFFA¹⁹). The presentation also integrated submissions made prior to the workshop by FSC, PEFC, IFFA, IMFN²⁰. Following the presentation, representatives of FSC, PEFC, IMFN and FFF provided complementary statements and comments.

The discussion made clear that there is a considerable need to strengthen practices that consider sustainability aspects more explicitly and concretely. C&I are one potentially effective tool to do so as they provide a common framework and means to enter into dialogue, communicate with practitioners and advocate about relevant sustainability aspects at local levels, and provide tools to different specific users and uses to consider these aspects in decision making. Strengthening the use of C&I at local practice levels was seen as a priority for future work on strengthening C&I.

The participants raised a number of issues/challenges associated with the use/potential use of C&I at local levels. To successfully promote and strengthen the use of C&I at this level requires even more

¹⁹ International Family Forest Alliance

²⁰ International Model Forest Network

emphasis on the key points raised in the discussion for national and regional level use. This includes developing or adapting practically useful tools involving key stakeholders and users, and demonstrating added value and benefits to users.

More than at regional and national levels, C&I at local levels need to be strongly simplified and adapted to the specific user groups and purposes. The overall challenge in strengthening the use of C&I at this level is to increase benefits (as perceived by the users) and bring excessive costs down. Tools where C&I can potentially provide added value range from investment decision support (project appraisal), community forest management planning and reporting on results to communities and clients, business plan development to gain access to credit or secure access to resources, corporate social responsibility reporting, performance scorecards, and others. Practice level tools can also help considering forest benefits in land use change and related communal administrative and investment decisions by other than forestry organizations and individuals.

Participants emphasized the key role of forest certification to use C&I at local level in forest management practice and the wealth of knowledge and experiences of forest certification schemes to engage with forest management decision makers, both large and small holders, and the use of C&I a reference framework for developing and applying forest certification standards.

Experts also pointed out that the scope of users to consider in further developing C&I tools in practice needs to be expanded from managers of permanent forest estates and “forest management units” to smallholders, multiple use contexts and land use decisions including other land use options. It also needs to address those (the majority) users that are informally managing or using forest resources to satisfy local needs. In many regions a large share of forest related sustainability issues fall into these type of forest use contexts. They complement more permanent forest estates and certified forest operations, the latter of which benefit in principle from access to (often export-) market based incentives for sustainable forestry, which are not relevant for informal businesses and operators. C&I tools are currently not well developed for such use contexts.

Participants also discussed the importance of taking a multiple land use / landscape perspective, which is more adequate to engage with local communities and smallholders that engage in a range of income earning activities such as farming and forestry. There is merit of developing, in a participatory way, local awareness of value and benefits forests to the local community, and to derive community-adequate criteria and indicators to sustainably manage, preserve and demonstrate these. While this is costly and takes time, considerable experience of the added value and benefits is available from model forest network pilots in different developing and developed countries on which to build. Using C&I as tools to help building and strengthening community forestry groups and their communication and sustainable management capacity holds considerable potential to strengthen sustainability of forests and forestry.

Emphasizing the need to promote more sustainable forestry and land use practices, participants recommended putting a focus of future work on developing and demonstrating the added value of practical applications of C&I at local levels. This includes similar actions as those for the national level

- Promote using simplified and user-adapted C&I as a framework for dialogue and communication on forest and sustainability in particular with local communities, producer organizations, local investors and operators;
- Identify and develop tools and instruments together with intended users to incentivize planning, management and demonstrating sustainable management of local organizations using simplified sets of C&I (including stronger local rights to access and use resources, facilitated access to credit, facilitated reporting to community organization members, and on progress by such groups to governments and to external audiences (clients, peers, government agencies, the public, etc.);
- Engage with investors and forest industry to further develop and enhance the use of C&I in project appraisals, management planning, monitoring and reporting (including corporate reporting on sustainability or social responsibility), adopting a client- and marketing orientation to tools development;
- Promote exchange of information and experiences by different bodies, involve research and education organizations, and identify means (including financial resources) to build capacities, including training courses for members of producer organizations and community forestry associations.

On concrete next steps for the project, the experts recommended

- Further compile C&I tools for main uses of C&I as used at local and cross-sectoral contexts in practice by different private bodies and initiatives and stakeholders, document concrete experiences and identify the value added to users, and lessons to share;
- Discuss practical examples of main uses of C&I at the local levels Regional C&I Workshops to be held in Latin America, Africa and Asia in spring 2015, with a view to better understand the value added proposition of available C&I applications to different specific user groups;
- Present results at a session at the XIV. World Forestry Congress 2015 in September 2015.

VII. Strengthening C&I use in SDG and cross-sectoral contexts

The objective of this session was to provide a platform for experts to share experiences, views and opinions and provide recommendations on strengthening the use of C&I and forest-related indicators in SDGs and in cross-sectoral sustainability contexts. As the international community prepares for the post-2015 development agenda, many stakeholders recognize that sustainable development will require and enable more cross-sectoral perspectives on sustainable development and to address cross-sectoral issues that surround forests and their use.

Two presentations were given to set the scene for the discussion on the topic. Ms. Ross provided an overview of indicators for sustainable agriculture and natural resources management and related initiatives, needs and the way forward. Mr. Reeves, International Institute for Environment and

Development (IIED), provided IIED's perspectives on forests, SDGs and indicators. These presentations were complemented by two FAO experts involved in providing FAO's input to the SDG process and work on SDG indicators across the different sectors covered by FAO. Subsequently, representatives of global and regional forest and non-forest organizations and bodies present at the workshop (UNFF, UNCCD, COMIFAC, ASEAN, ITTO, ACTO, FOREST EUROPE, FAO, FSC, etc) was invited to share views and suggestions.

The presentations and subsequent discussion highlighted different perspectives and related approaches to work on strengthening forest indicators in the context of SDGs.

The discussion focused around indicators for the 169 SDG targets (to be developed between March 2015 and March 2016), which will very likely focus on a few and highly aggregated indicators that meet the IAEG-MDG criteria of relevance, measurability, methodological soundness, and understandability. This will likely result in a core set of some 100 key indicators, possibly supplemented by a list of auxiliary indicators. The UN Statistical Commission, supported by the UN Technical Support Team comprising different UN entities, is expected to take the lead in crafting the SDG indicator framework. A challenge for all forest stakeholders will be to go beyond the forest coverage indicator used for monitoring MDG 7 and provide a valid indicator and data on the forest specific SDG target (15.2, see box below) that better captures sustainability in its economic, social and environmental dimensions.

Concerning the perspective and approach as outlined above, forests are explicitly mentioned in the following SDGs and related targets (Box 1). Strengthening the use of C&I in this context would require to provide a unified and widely agreed suggestion for one or two indicators per target to capture targets 6.6, 15.1 and 15.2.

Box 1. SDGs and targets explicitly referring to forests

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Target 6.6 by 2020 protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, **forests**, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage **forests**, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Target 15.1 by 2020 ensure conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular **forests**, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements

Target 15.2 by 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded **forests**, and increase afforestation and reforestation by x% globally.

With regard to the approach outlined in b. above, IIED presented a modular, "bottom-up" approach based on existing forest related C&I sets, as discussed at a workshop on "Enabling forest landscapes to

score SDG goals” held in Lima in November 2014. Strengthening the use of C&I in this context would require to further elaborate a list of specific indicators common in existing regional C&I and other indicator sets and work towards a widely shared agreement on compilation of related data with a view to communicating the contribution of forests to different SDGs through these indicators (either statistical data or other means).

Concerning sustainable agriculture and natural resources management indicators, there is a widely shared view that existing forest sector-specific indicators alone cannot capture underlying root causes and influences of other sectors, which are a major factor for progress (or not) on SFM. The discussion centred around approaches to complement existing sector-specific indicators with selected agricultural sector-wide indicators (forest as a subsector), such as land tenure, land use, land cover, or biodiversity and ecosystem conservation, indicators that tackle specific cross-sector topics (FLEGT, REDD+), or indicators that cover broader thematic areas (biodiversity, climate change, governance, energy, green economy). Reference was also made to work (e.g. UNCCD) under way to develop sustainable land management indicators. As work is on-going in different initiatives on the above topics, forest-related C&I experts would need to engage and contribute pro-actively to these processes, with a view to jointly develop indicators that adequately cover sustainability aspects in a cross-sector perspective.

On future work on strengthening C&I in SDG and cross-sectoral contexts, participants noted that the post-2015 SDG process provides both a huge opportunity and serious challenges to tackle sustainability in a more integrated, cross-sectoral way. In addition to further enhancing the role of indicators to promote performance and accountability it also provides a very broadly applicable and longer-term unified framework for orientation across all sectors with regard to key aspects of sustainable development. Given the high aggregation of SDG target related indicators at global levels, and the urgent need to tackle cross-sectoral dimensions of SFM at local, national and regional levels to address sustainability issues on the ground, participants widely agreed that this topic requires particular attention with regard to future work on strengthening the use of C&I. The following recommendations were made:

- work on strengthening the use of C&I needs to be pursued with regard to both SDGs and in cross-sectoral contexts at different levels and with different approaches;
- work on strengthening the use of C&I with regard to the SDGs needs to be pursued urgently, given existing work schedules on SDG indicators. What is needed is the development of proposals for statistically sound indicators that address the few indicators explicitly referring to forests, in particular one indicator on “ sustainable forest management” as specified in 15.2. In principle, the SDG process and related time schedules provide a rare opportunities to overcome the many conceptual, methodical and other barriers that prevented an agreement on one single indicator on SFM in the past decades;
- to complement, capture and communicate the multitude of further contributions of forests to different SDGs that do not explicitly refer to forests, indicators should be elaborated that are consistent with and based on existing indicator sets, including related measurement and reporting frameworks. This concerns forest contributions to selected SDGs addressing environmental, economic (including finance), social and governance dimensions. The ultimate

aim is to be able to communicate clear messages to decision-makers outside the sector and the general public;

- to address the many cross-sectoral issues of SFM at national and sub-national levels and in practice, pro-active involvement is needed in initiatives and processes that elaborate sustainable agriculture or land use indicator and measurement frameworks across sectors, and on key topics such as land tenure, climate change and energy.

On concrete next steps for the project, the experts recommended

- To use the C&I expert network present and involved in the C&I project to facilitate and provide technical input to work on the few core “forest” SDG indicators (in particular 15.2), and to help lead the development of indicators to better measure and demonstrate the forest contribution to a range of SDG indicators not making explicit reference to forests;
- To provide information and space for discussion on SDG indicators and further work on (integrated sustainable agriculture/land use) and cross-sectoral indicators at the Regional C&I Workshops to be held in Latin America, Africa and Asia in spring 2015;
- To focus a session of the global forest indicator event at the XIV. World Forestry Congress 2015 in September 2015 on the topic.

VIII. Strengthening C&I sets: socio-economic and governance indicators

The last topical session of the global C&I expert workshop focused on the further development and harmonization of a set of C&I indicators, which focuses particularly on topical areas where any future global C&I set would need to be strengthened in order to provide a more balanced perspective of SFM with regard to “people” aspects and “forest” aspects, and with regard to related key information needs in the context of the NLBI Global Objectives 2 and 4, SDGs, CBD Aichi Targets and others. The aim of the C&I project in this regard is to further explore in how far and which socio-economic and governance indicators can be further developed in a harmonized way to be taken up in a possible future version of what was called a “Common Forest Resources Questionnaire”, developed in collaboration of key regional bodies in the context of FRA2015.

The aim of the session was to report on background work to identify the most relevant socio-economic and governance topics as indicated by related commitments and goals/targets at global and regional levels. Short studies were commissioned on these to outline possible indicators and measurement specification, related data availability and suggestions for further work.

Mr. Cowling and Ms. Baycheva presented the work on forest governance indicators (e.g. participation, forest law enforcement, cross-sector coordination, institutional strength, forest tenure) and on a socio-

economic indicator related forest finance²¹. Mr. Drigo presented work on a possible wood energy indicator (work on an indicator on forest-related contribution to livelihood has started but was not presented).

The ensuing discussion observed that the topics addressed are indeed of key relevance at different levels, and that many of the regional C&I processes and global level reporting formats aim to capture the topics addressed. Given limited existing national data collection mechanisms and often lacking data verification mechanisms result in serious gaps in data and equally serious doubts about the reliability of some of the data reported (e.g use of fuelwood) . Large discrepancies also often exist between data sources at international and at national levels. Significant progress will need to be made compared to the current status of data availability and quality to address these shortcomings. This inevitably will take time, and further work is needed to explore options.

Participants suggested the following with regard to follow-up work.

- work on socio-economic and forest governance indicators needs to continue, including to provide input to different SDG dimensions (see chapter VII) and with a view to strengthen future reporting in the post-2015 IAF, including FRA2020 and a possible related expanded common questionnaire (CFRQ+ for 2020);
- Indicators and measurement specification proposals are and have to provide different levels of detail for national and sub-national level data collection and compilation compared to formats suitable for use at regional (regional reports on the state of forests) and global levels (FRA, reporting on GOF, SDGs). For the development of further harmonized global and regional indicators, these indicators and measurement specifications are best to be further developed taking into account existing regional and global reporting formats, existing data sources and data collection procedures;
- While all indicators currently addressed are clearly relevant, there is a particular need to work on those socio-economic and governance indicators that are required for SDGs and GOFs, including on forest finance.

IX. Conclusions and the way forward: revised C&I vision and roadmap elements

This session aimed at summarizing the recommendations provided by the experts during the workshop on the future use and potential of using sustainability indicators at different levels and in different contexts as summarized in this report. Overall, the following summary recommendations were presented and discussed by participants:

²¹²¹ The work on forest governance indicators was kindly sponsored by the UNREDD+ Programme.

- C&Is continue to be a key tool to promote sustainability. In addition to being one of the most effective tools in the past to promote and demonstrate sustainability, there is a high potential to strengthen their use.
- Over the last decade the focus with regard to work on C&I has gradually shifted from developing C&I sets for SFM to use of criteria / indicators to promote and demonstrate sustainability. Over the same period demand for measuring and demonstrating performance and for accountability for performance has grown, which increases the role of indicators.
- C&I sets are neither static over time nor can they be used as “ off-the-shelf” tools. To be adopted and used effectively, C&Is need to be adapted to specific needs and context, and need to provide added value to the different user groups at different levels for different purposes. For some main uses of C&I, such as regional (and partly global) level reporting on the status of forests and sustainable forest management or for forest certification at local levels, this adaptation and use has been successful.
- To promote key other uses of C&I and make full use of their potential to contribute to strengthening sustainability of forests, C&Is need to be adapted for each user group and specific purpose. Users need to be involved in the process, and need to recognize the added value of using C&I.
- Main groups to still further involve in adapting and using C&I are those affecting forests & sustainability most, which are mainly practitioners at local levels (smallholders, community groups, informal operators), and those making decisions about land use and land use change, including investors in agriculture, forestry and other land uses.
- The emerging framework of sustainable development goals provides a strong opportunity to address crucial cross-sectoral issues impacting sustainability of forests and the benefits they provide by making the contributions and linkages to other land uses more broadly visible. This will require substantial work in further developing related forest indicators, particularly on “people” aspects of SFM, and integrated indicators on sustainable agriculture/land use indicators.

Based on the recommendations and implications of the C&I expert workshop, the project team has further elaborated the C&I vision and roadmap elements (see Table 1), which was welcomed by the Steering Group/Technical Advisory Group Members. The revised C&I vision and roadmap elements which will serve as a basis for structuring the discussions at the Regional C&I Workshops in Latin America, Africa and Asia, C&I side-event at the UNFF11 and C&I sessions and events at the XIV World Forestry Congress in September, 2015.

Table 1. Revised C&I Vision and Roadmap elements (main uses of C&I and actions to further develop and strengthen their use)

C&I vision elements (main uses of C&I)	
1.	Use of C&I in promoting dialogue and in policy a) Policy dialogue, communication and advocacy on forest and sustainability aspects b) Guiding development/planning and implementation of policies, strategies and programmes
2.	Use of C&I in monitoring, assessment and reporting on forests and sustainability a) Guiding and structuring systematic data collection, monitoring and reporting on forests and sustainability b) Guiding and structuring cross-sectoral sustainability assessments and reporting
3.	Use of C&I as a framework to support sustainable practices a) Guiding forest management practice at landscape, community and management unit level (planning, implementation, monitoring, assessing, reporting) b) Guiding forest investment decisions c) Developing and applying tools to demonstrate sustainability
C&I roadmap elements (actions to further develop and strengthen their use)	
1.	Demonstrate and communicate added value and ways to use forest sustainability indicators in promoting sustainability
2.	Further develop and adapt forest sustainability indicators and related tools for different uses
3.	Further strengthen collaboration and coordination towards further harmonizing forest monitoring and reporting (incl. options for global forest indicator partnership), enhancing added value and efficiency
4.	Mobilize resources and strengthen capacities for using forest sustainability indicators in practice

Annex 1: Background note and draft programme

Strengthening C&I for SFM and their use in forest policy and practice (GCP/GLO/503/GER)

FAO Expert Workshop on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, 15-16 January, 2015, FAO, Rome

Background:

The FAO C&I project “Strengthening C&I for SFM and their use in forest policy and practice” (2014-2015) works on a widely shared vision and roadmap towards strengthening the use of C&I in policy and practice at global, regional, national and sub-national/forest management practice level. The year 2015 will provide a range of opportunities to discuss and promote the use of C&I in different contexts, in particular at the global (SDG, UNFF, WFC, other) and regional (C&I processes, other) levels. Based on a stock-taking of experiences, needs and potential for different uses are to be discussed in Regional C&I Workshops in Latin America, Asia and Africa in spring 2015, and at the XIV. World Forestry Congress in September 2015. Furthermore, the project aims to contribute to strengthening and further harmonizing current C&I sets, particularly on socio-economic and governance indicators, further contributing to harmonized forest-related monitoring and reporting in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, UNFF, FAO Forest Resources Assessment and reporting to other forest-related policy processes at global and regional levels.

Objectives of the meeting:

The objective of the C&I expert workshop is to:

- a) discuss the interim results of the FAO C&I project in terms of experiences, needs and potential for different main uses of C&Is and possible further work on indicator sets related to socio-economic and governance indicators;
- b) provide guidance on the way forward towards a widely shared vision and roadmap towards strengthening the use of C&I in policy and practice at different levels;
- c) Provide guidance on the next operational steps of the FAO C&I project to further contribute to harmonized forest-related monitoring and reporting, particularly on socio-economic and governance indicators.

Expected participants:

A total of around 20 experts will be invited from main C&I process secretariats, C&I related experts representing main user groups at global (SDG, UNFF, FAO FRA), regional and management practice (forest certification, private sector) levels. The participation at the C&I expert workshop is by invitation.

Expected results:

The results of the C&I expert workshop should provide the basis for discussion of the vision and roadmap elements and further work on C&I indicators at the Regional C&I Workshops on “Strengthening C&I for SFM and their use in forest policy and practice”, to be held in spring 2015 and the C&I sessions to be organized at the World Forestry Congress in September 2015. It should also inform and guide on actions related to monitoring and reporting in the context of UNFF11, FAO CFRQ and the preparation of indicators for SDGs.

Draft Programme

Venue: Queen Juliana Room, Building B, 3rd Floor

Thursday 15th January		Speakers
08:45-09:00	Welcome/opening remarks, introduction of participants	FAO FOM Director
09:00-09:10	Workshop/meeting agenda, objectives and expected outcomes	Rametsteiner
09:10-09:30	Introduction to the project: Strengthening C&I for SFM and their use in forest policy and practice. Possible elements for a 10-year vision on C&I (2015-2025) and options for a joint 5 –year roadmap (2015-2020)	Rametsteiner / Baycheva
SESSION I: Strengthening C&I use at global, regional, national and FMU levels		
09:30-11:00	<p>REGIONAL LEVEL</p> <p>Presentation: Experiences, potential and options to strengthen C&I use at regional levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspectives of regional C&I processes (ACTO, COMIFAC, ITTO, ASEAN, Montreal Process, Forest Europe) <p>Discussion: views and recommendations on work ahead towards a roadmap to strengthen C&I use at regional levels; implications for Regional C&I Workshops</p>	Regional consultants, C&I process secretariat representative
11:00 -11:30 Coffee break		
11:30-13:00	<p>NATIONAL LEVEL</p> <p>Presentation: Current uses, needs and potential for enhancing main C&I uses at national levels (Latin America, Asia, Africa incl. Near East)</p> <p>Discussion: views on status, issues and work ahead towards a roadmap to promote C&I use at national levels; implications for Regional C&I Workshops</p>	Regional consultants
13:00-14:30 Lunch break		
14:30-16:00	<p>GLOBAL LEVEL</p> <p>Introduction presentation: C&I in the context of IAF/UNFF/CPF post-2015 arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspectives of global UN processes (UNFF, CBD, UNFCCC, CCD, FAO) <p>Discussion: experiences, views and recommendations on issues/options and work ahead towards a roadmap for strengthening use of C&I at global levels (incl. in the context of SDGs/UNFF/CBD/CCD/UNFCCC, etc)</p>	Caswell (VC) UNFF, CBD, UNFCCC, CCD
16:00-16:30 Coffee break		
16:30-18:00	<p>FMU LEVEL</p> <p>Presentation: C&I for SFM, needs and ways to strengthen their use in the private sector: forest certification, forest management and community forestry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspectives of global forest certification schemes, model forests and community forestry groups (FSC, PEFC, IMFN, FFF) <p>Discussion: views on status, issues and work ahead towards a roadmap to</p>	Regional consultants, FSC, PEFC, Model Forest Network, FFF, community forestry expert

	promote C&I use by private bodies; implications for Regional C&I Workshops	
18:00-18:30	Plenary discussion: summary of comments, implications and views on the way forward and next steps	All
18:30-18:45	Summary and closing of Day 1	

Friday 16 th January		Speakers
09:00-09:15	Recap of Day 1 and introduction to Day 2	
SESSION II: Strengthening C&I use in SDG and cross-sectoral contexts		
09:15-11:00	Presentation: Indicators for sustainable agriculture and natural resources management– initiatives, needs, way forward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating forests in the post 2015 development agenda: SDGs and forests - IIED Perspectives of global UN processes and other (UNFF, CBD, UNFCCC, CCD, ICRAF, FAO) Discussion: views on status, issues and work ahead towards a roadmap to strengthen sustainability indicator use across sectors	Ross (Skype), IIED, UNFF, CBD, UNFCCC, CCD, ICRAF, FAO
11:00-11:30	Coffee break	
SESSION III: Strengthening C&I sets: socio-economic and governance indicators		
11:30-13:00	Presentation: Proposals for further developed indicators on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> forest governance topics (tenure, participation, institutional capacity, cross-sector coordination) socio-economic topics (wood energy, livelihoods/poverty, finance) Discussion: comments on proposals, issues and recommendations on work ahead towards further development of indicators and promoting/facilitating their consideration/uptake at global and regional levels	Cowlin (VC), Drigo (VC)
13:00-14:30	Lunch break	
SESSION IV: Strengthening C&I sets: recommendations on the way forward		
14:30-15:30	Presentation: Recap of the vision and roadmap elements Plenary discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comments and recommendations on the draft vision and roadmap elements for strengthening C&I use in policy and practice at different levels; and recommendations on the way forward and next steps for the C&I project (Regional C&I Workshops 2015, C&I events at WFC 2015, other global and regional processes and events incl. UNFF11,..) 	All
15:30	Summary and closing of the C&I expert workshop	Rametsteiner
15:30-16:00	Coffee break	
Project Steering Group meeting		

16:00-18:00	<p>a) Review of status and progress in implementation of the project;</p> <p>b) Discussion and recommendations on focus of further work in 2015, implications for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C&I regional workshops in Africa, Asia and Latin America • XIV World Forestry Congress • UNFF11 <p>c) Strategic and policy guidance to enhance uptake of results and impact;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and outreach, e.g. meetings and events calendar, project webpage, etc <p>d) Follow-up, incl. next SG meeting</p>	SG members, (open to TAG members)
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FINAL

Annex 2: List of Participants

Strengthening C&I for SFM and their use in forest policy and practice (GCP/GLO/503/GER)

FAO Expert Workshop on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, 15-16 January, 2015, FAO, Rome

Draft list of participants

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