

**National Report to the Fourth Session of the
United Nations Forum on Forests**

Name of country: ITALY

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I. Key Contacts

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II. Progress and issues related to implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action

General

1. Please provide additional or new information on initiatives taken or lessons learned since 1997 further to the information on forests included in your national reports¹ to UNFF 2 and UNFF 3, the Commission on Sustainable Development, and other international instruments and organizations on the following points:
 - assessment (including of the relevance, priority, status of implementation, planned actions) of the IPF/IFF proposals for action in the national context
 - development and implementation of your national forest programme or similar national policy framework for forests, and
 - mechanisms or initiatives to facilitate stakeholder participation, including indigenous and local communities, in forest sector planning, decision-making and/or forest management.

Report

The general considerations set out in Italy's report for UNFF3 are still valid for the current report, in particular the inapplicability of the suggested method of referring to IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, due to the Italian administrative situation.

Please take note that much of the information concerning the thematic issues of UNFF4 are already contained in the report submitted for the previous session.

For the current report, we believe that priority reference must be given to two particularly significant events that occurred during 2003:

- the expert workshop on Forest Landscape Restoration in the Mediterranean region, that took place in Castellabate (province of Salerno) the 8/10 May 2003, organized by the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (CMC) in partnership with the International Association for Mediterranean Forests (IAMF), the International Centre for Mediterranean Cultural Landscape (ICMCL) and the WWF Mediterranean Programme Office (MedPO) ;
- the meeting held in Vallombrosa the 23-24 October 2003, on "Selviculture 5 years later the 2nd National Congress of Venice (June 1998), organized by "Osservatorio Foreste Ambiente", "Corpo Forestale dello Stato", "Regione Toscana", "Associazione Forestale Italiana", "Consulta Nazionale Foreste-Legno-Carta" and "Accademia Italiana di Scienze Forestali".

As far as the program element on Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting (MAR) is concerned, we would also like to highlight the contribution of the Italian delegation's experts to the UNFF Country-led Initiative on Lessons Learned on implementation of IPF/IFF P.f.A., held in Viterbo from 17 to 20 March 2003.

On the same subject, the side event in the COP9 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change should also be noted. This event, held on December 3, 2003, was dedicated to dialogue between state bodies and environmentalist associations.

On that occasion, the representative of the Ministry of Agricultural and Forest Policies highlighted the fundamental role of the FAO towards the sustainable development of forests and forestry, also in specific relation to the use of renewable energy resources.

Implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to thematic issues of UNFF 4

Please provide information on: activities undertaken since 1997, progress made, constraints encountered, lessons learned, and issues that have emerged, as well as relevant information related to means of implementation (financing, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and capacity-building) to support the following actions:

social and cultural aspects of forests

2. promoting the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of forest genetic resources and addressing the issue of intellectual property rights, including the identification of the origins of forest genetic resources, taking into account work undertaken by the Convention on Biological Diversity and other international agreements
3. strengthening the role of women in sustainable forest management, including through capacity building and greater participation in community-based forest management
4. integrating local and indigenous communities in sustainable forest management programmes, particularly as regards (a) recognition and respect of the customary and traditional rights and privileges of indigenous and local communities, (b) participation in decision making regarding the management of forests, (c) the attainment of secure land tenure arrangements, (d) capacity building and technology transfer for sustainable forest management directed at indigenous and local communities

Report

The three above-mentioned aspects were specifically dealt with in both events indicated in the general part. Please refer to the final report of these events.

Significant initiatives, in strict connection with the programs and regulations of the European Union, pertained to COST (Co-operation on Scientific and Technological) actions. Other initiatives of importance for the involvement of youth and entrepreneurs were carried out in the region of Tuscany and in other regions and provinces, among which the autonomous-statute provinces of Trento and Bolzano.

It is nevertheless necessary to stress, in relation to the above-mentioned aspects, the importance of studies carried out in the last decade under the impetus of the Italian Academy of Forest Science (AISF). These studies were designed to deepen understanding on “the Forest and the Man” relationship.

Another important initiative, on the same topic, involved interesting presentations on “The forests in European culture from reality to the imaginary”, given at the international conference organized by the Rome 3 University in November 1999.

As far as the role of women is concerned in SFM, with particular reference to mountain areas, which in Italy are considerably large, we would highlight the interesting studies of the Alpine Ecology Centre of Trento on the topic “Matriarchy and the Mountain”.

A certain reference to the role of women in Forest Sustainable Management can also be found in the initiative of the National Watch Office for Female Entrepreneurship and Work in Agriculture. This watch office has been dedicated for various years to sector issues, even at the international level, with a particular view to developing countries.

The role of local communities in the durable management of mountain areas, including forest areas, with their specific importance, is in fact amply dealt with in the Italian report on the State of Mountains,

presented in 2002 on the occasion of the International Year of the Mountain as proclaimed by the FAO.

traditional forest-related knowledge

5. inventorying, cataloguing, and applying traditional forest related knowledge for sustainable forest management and promoting research on TFRK with the involvement of the knowledge holders
6. supporting the application of intellectual property rights and/or other protection regimes for traditional forest related knowledge, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of traditional forest related knowledge, innovations and practices

Report:

The references set out in the preceding points are valid for the above aspects as well, with particular reference to initiatives promoted at regional and local levels, as well as studies carried out by universities and specialized institutes.

scientific forest-related knowledge

Report:

Forest research in Italy is carried out by several organizations:

- a) institutes and departments of the eleven Forestry Faculties of Italian Universities;
- b) three research institutions of the Italian National Research Council (CNR);
- c) two forest research Institutes (Institute for Applied Research in Forest and Range management –ISAF- and Institute for Applied Research in Silviculture-ISSA) scientific branches of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MIPAF);
- d) the Italian Academy of Forest Science (AISF), a non-profit institution having among its tasks the promotion and dissemination of research on technical, economic and legal issues related to silviculture and environmental protection.

Through its research institutes Italy joins international research networks like the European Forest Institute (EFI) and the IUFRO. 23 forest research organizations are networked at national level through the National Union of Forest Institutes (UNIF).

Funding for forest research in Italy is mobilized through: i) national and regional public resources, with research contracts funded by the Ministry of University and Scientific Research, Ministry for Environment, National Institute of Agricultural Economy, Regional Agencies for Agriculture and Forestry; ii) partnerships with other EU research organisations in the framework of EU funded research programmes (e.g. COST, ENV and FAIR) and LIFE-Nature funding.

Dissemination of research results and scientific discussion takes place via traditional ways (e.g. in the framework of thematic conferences, courses and lectures; publication of academic proceedings, technical and scientific monographs, collections of essays and journals) but also via the Internet. From the end of 90s most scientific reports and publications are accessible via the Internet. Academic libraries have on-line catalogues and full access to electronic articles of leading international scientific journals.

One central online-platform for forest research has been recently set-up (e.g. www.ricercaforestale.it) providing links to nationally relevant forest research projects, databases, libraries and publications and sources of national and European research funding. Internet technology is also used to promote public discussion on technical and scientific issues: e.g. the Italian Academy of Forest Sciences is currently chairing an e-forum on the development of Standards of sustainable forest management of application in Appennine and Mediterranean Forests (SAM; www.aisf.it).

7. enhancing interaction between scientific research and policy processes, including priority setting of research, addressing of knowledge gaps and using scientific knowledge to support decision-making

Report

Scientific and technical consultancy to the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is mainly provided by the network of its 23 Research Institutes of applied research in agriculture (IRSA) comprising, as said before, two forest research institutes (ISAFa and ISSA). ISAFa, notably, supports MIPAF in the design and coordination of the National Forest Inventory.

Other academic organizations conduct studies and research on topics relevant to national and European policies on forests and nature conservation, through specific contracts with national agencies. From the end of 90s the scientific community has provided, through specific projects, finalised knowledge on several issues: e.g. development of a technical and scientific framework for sustainable forest management in Natura 2000 forest sites and National parks, design of a national forestry legislation etc.

In its work of consultancy to National and Regional Agencies the scientific community participates to the planning process, having the potential to influence strategies and actions taken in the field of forest management and nature conservation.

However a severe limiting condition for a fruitful cooperation between scientific research and forest policy in Italy seems the lack of a unified policy planning framework, like a National Forest Program (NFP), addressing goals, providing legal and political instruments and funding for the enhancement of the capacity building (i.e. training, education and research) in the field of sustainable forest management.

monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions

8. improving information on national forest resources, making the information widely available, and assisting other countries in their related efforts

Report:

The most comprehensive source of information on forests resources at national level is the National Forest Inventory (NFI). Italy, however, has not a long-established tradition in forest inventories, compared to other EU countries where NFIs information is periodically updated approx. on a 5-10 yrs basis. The first Italian National Forest Inventory was carried out in 80s (1983-87) and it is still the main source of forest information used in Italy. Only in 2003 a new National Forest Inventory has been initiated, carried out by the Corpo Forestale dello Stato

(CFS) with the scientific support of ISAF; the last phase of the new NFI is scheduled for 2005. NFI results will be disseminated through technical papers and various publications, but the Internet will be likely the main way to spread more widely the most relevant national figures.

The quantitative and qualitative forest attributes that are going to be assessed in the framework new Italian National Forest Inventory have been selected also in consideration of the international reporting duties on forest resources, set-up by the UN/ECE/FAO Temperate and Boreal Forest Resource Assessment (TBFRA-2000) and the MCPFE processes; accordingly the inventory adopts the TBFRA-2000 definition for the forest and other wooded land area.

The standard set of definitions on forests set-up in the framework of the TBFRA and the MCPFE processes (e.g. definition of forest plantations, mixed forest, protected areas etc.) is becoming increasingly applied in monitoring and assessment initiatives conducted at national and sub-national level.

Italy participates also to the scientific and technical bodies of the EU and UN/ECE/FAO concerned with monitoring and reporting on forest resources at international level (Team of Specialist of TBFRA-2005, MCPFE Expert groups).

criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management

9. developing and using criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management (at national level and/or subnational level and for policy, planning, management and/or monitoring purposes), and participating in regional and/or international C&I processes

Report:

European countries joining the MCPFE process, like Italy, have agreed on a set of criteria and indicators (C&I) of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) to be assessed and reported periodically at national level (MCPFE, 2003). Reporting under the MCPFE process is part of a collective endeavour to establish a permanent framework for checking that current forest characteristics in EU countries, and trends over ten years, are in line with the commitments of MCPFE policy. Italy is supporting MCPFE activities coordinating an international working group on Forest Types studying a Pan-European forest types classification workable for reporting MCPFE forest type based indicators.

To promote the use of wood and of the full range of goods and services provided by sustainably managed forests Italy encourages the development and implementation of schemes of forest certification, a process in which the scientific community is actively involved.

Italy has submitted a national forest certification scheme to the Pan-European Forest Certification (PEFC), which is now undergoing the PEFC endorsement process. The Forest Steward Council (FSC) has accredited an Italian certification body (ICILA) and the FSC-Italy adopted in 2002 a sub-national level scheme of standards for the sustainable management of Alpine forests. At present in Italy, however, holders of PEFC (2 organizations) and FSC (64 organizations) certifications are companies accredited with Chain of Custody Certificates not lands issued with forest management certificates.

The AISF is currently chairing a platform of discussion for the agreement of a scheme of Standards for the SFM of Appennine and Mediterranean forests (SAM, see § 7). The work is carried out adopting a participatory approach, with a coordination committee structured in thematic areas, working out a basic proposal and periodical public discussions open to all

interested parties (through e-forum and public meetings) for a wider consultation and progressive improvement of the proposal. SAM scheme is going to be definitively adopted by mid 2004.

III. Preparation of the Report

10. Describe the process of preparing this report, including which government agencies and stakeholder groups were involved, and the extent to which they contributed. Provide information on successes, challenges and lessons learned in the preparation of this report.

Report

The same conclusions of the previous report can be repeated here, as follows:

This report was prepared on the basis of existing documents, which have been mentioned, and which have been an extremely important source of indications and reflections.

It is worth recalling how the process that brought to their drafting has been fruit of intense debates that have largely involved public administrations, private sector, media and social society as a whole.

