

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

Norway

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

General

1. Additional or new information on initiatives taken or lessons learned since 1997

The UNFF Session 3 Report is mainly still valid. (The report to UNFF 3 will be found at: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/reports.html>)

The downward trend of the forest sector is proceeding. The forest sector represents about 0,8 % of the GDP in 2002, 1,3 % of employment, and 6,9 % of export value, not including oil and gas. The relative importance of the contribution of the forestry sector to the national GDP has declined, cf table 1.

Table 1. GDP and employment in the forest sector year 2002. Source: Statistics Norway 2003 (www.ssb.no)

<i>Sub-sector</i>	<i>Share of total GDP</i>	<i>Share of export value¹ (not including services, oil and gas)</i>	<i>Share of employment</i>
Forestry ³	0,1 %	0,1 %	0,3 %
Pulp and paper	0,3 %	5,8 %	0,4 %
Wood and wood products ²	0,4 %	0,9 %	0,7 %
Total	0,8 %	6,9 %	1,3 %

Notes:

1) Export refers to export of commodities

2) Wood and wood products do not include furniture

3) Gross product for forestry refers to year 2001 and includes hunting and fishing except salmon fishing

The annual cut is far below the annual growth of 21.9 mill cu.m. The reported cuts for 2003 adds up to about 7 mill cu.m. During the last 80 years, the standing volume have increased from about 300 mill cu.m to ab 650 mill cu.m. The increment per year have in the same period increased from about 11 mill to about 22 mill cu.m.

For the time being, changes are accomplished in administrative systems to bring about decentralisation of policy measures to regional and local levels. Main effects to be expected are increased focus on value adding activities especially to the benefit of rural population. As for rural areas and land and resource management in rural areas, policy and strategies are focusing on a more overall, integrated approach.

The strategy change is and will be reflected in the set-up of legal, administrative and economic measures.

Assessment of the IPF/IFF proposals for action in the national context

Currently the emphasis is on a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, as well as the forest related provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Agricultural University of Norway will conduct the work, and relevant stakeholders are invited to participate in the process.

Development and implementation of a national forest programme or similar national policy framework for forests in Norway.

The work is proceeding along the lines reported in the UNFF Session 3 Report.

The draft of a new Forest Act, which was introduced in the UNFF Session 3 Report, is subject to a formal hearing, terminating in spring 2004.

A program transferring decisions to local communities and county boards concerning how to use budget measures and how to practice regulations start this year.

Mechanisms or initiatives to facilitate stakeholder participation in forest sector planning, decision-making and/or forest management

The work is proceeding along the lines referred to in the UNFF Session 3 Report

As to sustainable forest management and certification, close to 100 % of the annual cut are now subject to certification systems evaluation and national performance standards. The forestry performance level standards are now about to be revised, with the stakeholders taking part in the revising process.

The Norwegian saw-milling industries are by far based upon domestic timber, and about 45 % of the production have formal chain-of-custody certificates adapted and edited according to the same principles as for forestry. Even though the rest do not have a formal chain-of-custody certificate it will by large fulfil the requirements set by the certification standards since the timber is coming from certified forests.

A new Act on the Right to Environmental Information entered into force 1 January 2004. It provides all citizens with a legal right to obtain environmental information from public authorities as well as from public and private enterprises, including information on management of natural resources. The Act also extends the right of citizens to obtain information about the environmental consequences of the activities and decisions of public bodies. This right applies to state, country and municipal bodies.

The new Act is an important step in making the right to environmental information more concrete and operational. The Act is also necessary for following up Norwegian obligations under international agreements, but goes significantly further in several respects. The main purpose of the Environmental Information Act is that it should make it possible for citizens, by getting better access to information, to take active part in – and contribute to – efforts to improve protection of the environment.

Representatives of environmental organisations, media, industry and consumer organisations will be invited to participate in an appeals board which will be established to consider complaints related to the follow up of this Act in private enterprises.

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

Social and cultural aspects of forests and traditional forest-related knowledge

2. *Promoting the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from 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.*

The Ministry of Agriculture has in 2001 established an advisory board on genetic resources in forests, crops and farm animals and a national committee on forest genetic resources for the management of the national program on forest genetic resources.

The Norwegian Government appointed in April 2001 an expert committee assigned to examine Norwegian legislation with the aim to strengthen legal measures for the protection of biodiversity in Norway, included how legislation responds to the issues within the scope of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant international instruments.

Access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing are identified as separate and priority issues in this legislative work as this is an area not yet subject to legislation in Norway. Norway is considered as both a provider and user country of genetic resources, and therefore the mandate of the committee is to propose regulations with regard to both access to genetic resources in Norway and regulations concerning the use of genetic resources originating from other countries when used in Norway.

The committee recently arranged a hearing where relevant stakeholders were invited. The indigenous people (the Sami people) are represented in the reference group of the Committee. The Committee shall present its report to the Government by the 1 June 2004. The report will then have to be followed by a government proposal for new legislation to be adopted by the Parliament.

As a follow-up to “the Strategy for Conservation of Genetic Resources in the Nordic Region 2001-2004”, a project group was established to submit proposals on how the Nordic region is to interpret the provisions in international legal instruments within the framework of co-operation on genetic resources (A Nordic Approach to Access and Rights to Genetic Resources, ANP 2003:717). The Group’s main recommendations and conclusions were used as a basis for a declaration by the Nordic Council of Ministers (fisheries, agriculture, forestry and food issues, and environmental questions) on the access and rights to genetic resources in the Nordic region. The Council recommends the Nordic countries to determine the legal status of their forest tree genetic resources. The Council concludes that there are no convincing reasons to suggest regulations regarding the exchange of forest trees genetic resources in the Nordic countries.

The Norwegian government submitted on 9 May 2003 a legislative proposal to amend the current Patent Law to Parliament. The legislative proposal (Ot.prp. nr. 86 (2002-03) reads as follows (free translation from Norwegian, new para. 8b): "If an invention concerns or uses biological material, the inventor shall disclose in the patent application the country providing such material. If national legislation in the providing country requires prior informed consent before providing such material, the application shall include information on whether such consent has been sought."

3. *Strengthening the role of women in sustainable forest management, including through capacity building and greater participation in community-based forest management*

In the annual Parliamentary Budget Proposition, the Ministry of Agriculture underline the importance of increasing the female quota and influence within the forest sector as a whole; forest owners, organisation membership, and in boards and councils. The county governors have made efforts in following up this matter in their own administration and activities, and motivate local forest owner associations to do the same.

The legal framework regulating transactions of agricultural property (including forest areas) within the family, provides equal rights to females and males, and has done so since 1975. Although males represent about 80 % of the forest owners, the number of female owners is increasing. The organisation Women in Forestry ("Jenter i Skogbruket") is working to strengthen the influence and position of women in the forest sector as a whole, and receives public funding in support of its work. Furthermore the Ministry of Agriculture is supporting a running research project at Centre for Rural Research ("Senter for Bygdeforskning") to explore differences in the way men and women behave as active managers of their forest properties.

In the guiding comments following the budget appropriation to the Forest Extension Institute it is underlined that an important target for the Institution is to increase the share of females taking part in the courses and training offered by the institution. The share of women is about 10 % and has been on that level for the last years. It is a priority to organize and plan training and competence-building activities in the forest sector in a way that attract both female and male participants.

During the last years, there has been a deliberate work within public activities to increase the share of women in general and especially in the management teams. A variety of instruments are taken into use, and the Ministry of Agriculture has adopted a specific strategy document to govern the efforts to increase the female share at all levels in the organisation. The strategy is guiding all new engagements. Also, according to the Norwegian Gender Equality Act, at least 40 % of each sex is to be represented in public boards, councils and working groups.

4. *Integrating local and indigenous communities in sustainable forest management programmes,
incl. 5. – 6. Traditional forest-related knowledge.*

Currently the central authorities are revising the regime for central and local public management of land and forest resources. This process of decentralization will increase both

the competence and powers of local authorities. Also the influence and involvement of local communities in natural resource management will be strengthened.

National committees are established to consider the influence of the indigenous people (Sami people) in the management of land and water resources in their traditional areas, and changes have been proposed.

The government has submitted a law proposal to the Parliament concerning the county of Finnmark, which implies that the land owned by the state in this county will be transferred to a new corporate body called "Finnmarkseiendom" (Finnmark Land Property). The area in question comprises about 95 % of the county, or approximately 45 000 km². The new body will be managed by representatives officially appointed by the Finnmark County Council and the Sami Parliament. The Finnmark Act will contain rules for the use of the natural resources, which are to be managed in a sustainable and balanced way to benefit the Sami culture and heritage, reindeer husbandry, economic life in general as well as other inhabitants and the public of the community and the county. The proposed law stipulates that the local people as well as the public in general are entitled to use and employ to good purpose the renewable resources, including forest resources. It provides that the diversity and productivity of the nature should be preserved. Due to the climatic conditions, this region contains only modest forestry resources and little forestry activities.

The proposed Finnmark Act is based on international law pertaining to indigenous peoples and minorities. In particular, the UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the ILO Convention 169, have been taken into account.

Specifically, the law proposal addresses the influence of the Sami people and local communities in local resource management. The Finnmark Act is expected to pass the Parliament in 2004.

Several special reports has been vital to the writing of the Finnmark Act the most important being the Sami Rights Commission report published in NOU1997: 34 "Naturgrunnlaget for samisk kultur" (The nature as a basis of the Sami culture) The Sami Rights Commission is currently working on the regions south of Finnmark, and according to the time schedule, a new report will be presented in 2005. Also this report will deal with existing rights and land use as well as the utilisation of natural resources in areas with Sami population. The participation and influence of the Sami population as well as other local people will be addressed in this report too.

The Sami Parliament, which was instituted according to the Sami Act of 6 June 1987, is an advisory body entitled to comment on all matters affecting the Sami people as an indigenous people. In accordance with the Sami Act the scope of the Sami Parliament includes all matters and cases which the Parliament in their own understanding are of concern to the Sami people as a minority or ethnic group. The Sami Parliament is in this respect also entitled to comment on the draft of the new Forest Act, which present is subject to a formal hearing.

Scientific forest-related knowledge

7. *Disseminating scientific knowledge to all interested parties, and strengthening capacity and mobilizing funding for national and regional research institutions and networks,*
8. *Enhancing interaction between scientific research and policy processes.*

Public financing of research is effected through processes of interaction with several stakeholders taking part. This applies for most fields and subjects of research in general and for the forestry sector as well. There are several financial means from the different Ministries who are mainly administered by The Research Council of Norway. Research is also partly financed by the public budgets given to universities and different advanced colleges.

The public priorities for scientific knowledge are defined in political documents such as White Papers to the Parliament and in the annual State Budget, as well as in the processes of building up research programs and accomplishing these. Important stakeholders are represented and take part in the management systems of the Research Council as well as in the management committees of the research programs. The representatives cover different demands and roles and include researchers, administrators and users. The individual researchers and the research institutions give important contributions to science-based knowledge for the future through networks with other researchers/institutions and through new and ongoing research programs. This includes national networks as well as participation in international research networks, programs and projects, as EU programs, IUFRO, European Forest Institute and the networks built up by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The overall strategy is to adopt interdisciplinary research as well as to cover the entire value chain when establishing research programs. Different scientific disciplines and different parts of a generic entity are being encouraged to form meaningful, larger and coherent research units. Planning of research involves a large number of stakeholders.

Dissemination of research results is mainly the responsibility of the research institution or the research program in question. Open seminars during the program period, at the start of the program or at the end also offer arenas for disseminating results as well as recognition of new demands for knowledge based upon research (knowledge gaps). In general the public administration make use of new knowledge as a basis for policy implementation. Moreover, they commission scientific studies and analysis for specific political or administrative purposes.

The Ministry of Agriculture is also providing financial support directed to extension service and distribution of scientific results to the forest industry and to stakeholders in general. The Forest Extension Institute offers a wide range of courses and training seminars targeted at actors within the forest sector, and provide forest related information to different stakeholders and the public. Other important tasks for the Forest Extension Institute include bringing together scientists and the users of information, and to “translate” scientific results into applicable information for decision makers and practitioners.

The Forest Act authorizes a research fee drawn from all harvested wood sales to a research fund, which is supporting research and development projects and programs within forestry. The Board of this institution counts representatives from forest sector. The Forest Act also authorizes a mandatory contribution to a forest trust fund on all wood sales for investments purposes to the benefit of each single forest estate. The Forest Trust Fund opens up for

competence building and training activities to the benefit of forest owners, as well as financing of training and capacity building.

Monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions

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

The National Forest Inventory (NFI) of Norway, established in 1919, is the main source of information on forest resources at national and regional levels. The NFI is designed as a sample survey. In the period of 1986-1993, a grid of permanent sample plots was established. These plots are revisited every 5th year. In 2004 all plots will have been revisited twice. The NFI allows detailed monitoring of the forest areas of Norway. Forest resources information has been improved by expanding the assessments on both ecological and technical issues. Since 1995 more intensive surveys have been carried out to provide updated forest statistics at county level. In 2001, 5 of 19 counties (administrative regions) had received updated information on their forest resources. Revision of attributes of the NFI is an on going process, and the next major revision will take place in 2005.

Through support from the Ministry of Agriculture, a comprehensive research project, Environmental Inventories in Forests, was carried out by the Norwegian Forest Research Institute and partners. The aim of the project was to identify environmental features in forests and to develop a methodology for how to incorporate the protection of these features in forest management planning. In addition to being applied in forest management plans, the results from the project are also adopted by the NFI, giving a possibility to monitor the occurrence and development of the selected features in a representative way.

By active participation in FAO's efforts in global forest resource assessments, the information on Norwegian forest resources has been made available to the global community. In order to give a comprehensive picture of protected and protective forests in Europe, Norway supported a project aimed at developing assessment guidelines for protected and protective forest and other wooded land in Europe. The project was carried out in the context of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, prior to the Ministerial Conference in Vienna 2003.

In 2003, information from the NFI has been published on the Internet as an interactive database service. Users can define their own tables and charts based on NFI data. The service can be found at <http://skog.nijos.no>.

Based on experience from forest inventories and forest management planning, Norwegian experts and companies have been involved in several international projects for assisting countries in reconstructing or enhancing systems for forest resource management. Recently a project on establishing systems for supporting forest management was completed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while similar projects in the Province of Kosovo and in Serbia are scheduled for completion in 2003 and 2004.

Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management

10. *Developing and using criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management, and participating in regional and/or international C&I processes*

The “Living Forests” Project has been a broadly based project working for sustainable forest management in Norway. The development of a set of performance level standards has been the main challenge for “Living Forests”. In March 1998, the “Living Forests” Project successfully completed a consensus among all involved stakeholders on 23 performance level standards for sustainable forest management in Norway. The basis for establishing the project was the increased international focus on forest and environmental issues, e.g. within the market, as well as the desire within Norwegian forestry to practice responsible forest management in a long-term perspective. The “Living Forests” Standards were based on the Pan-European Criteria for Sustainable Forest Management, and the corresponding indicators were included among the 95 “Living Forests” Indicators. All of these indicators have though not yet been fully implemented in the context of national forest policy development, implementation and evaluation

An evaluation of the “Living Forests” Standards is currently (2003) being carried out by the private sector in cooperation with different stakeholders. Work is also going on to assess to what degree the “Living Forests” Standards have influenced the actual forestry measures. The evaluation is expected to lead to a revision of the “Living Forests” Indicators, likely to be completed in 2005. Generally, the “Living Forests” Standards have been the basis for forest certification in Norway. By far the greater parts of the Norwegian forests are certified in connection with the ISO 14001 environmental management system, in accordance with the “Living Forests” Standards.

A process on the revision of the pan-European Criteria and Indicators was carried out prior to the MCPFE Conference in Vienna 2003. Norway was represented in the series of workshops convened in order to improve the indicators. The results from these discussions ended up in a proposal for a revised set of indicators for sustainable forest management, while the six criteria remain unchanged. The Vienna Ministerial Conference approved the indicators.

A reporting of updated results, according to the existing pan-European indicators, took place in 2002. When assessing the data from TBFRA 2000 (Temperate and Boreal Forest Resources Assessment), it had turned out that the data on protected and protective forest areas often seemed to be illogical, and that the guidelines have been interpreted differently by individual correspondents. To improve the situation, Norway provided support to the MCPFE by making one expert available for revising the classification system and collecting data on protected and protective forest areas. This work ended up in a new classification system, and the data collected for the Vienna Conference was classified according to the new system.

III. Preparation of the Report

A draft of this report was prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture and sent for comments to a selection of government agencies and stakeholder groups.

Comments by the involved agencies and stakeholders have been included in the final report.