

## **Minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Working Group meeting 2-3 December 2004, Florence, Italy**

### **1. Countries represented**

Austria (Gabler), Czech Republic (Horčíčková), Denmark (Jørgensen), Estonia (Adermann), Finland (Korhonen, Reporter), France (Hervé and Vidal, Chair), Germany (Polley), Great Britain (Bull), Hungary (Kolozs), Iceland (Kjartansson), Italy (Scotti and Gasparini), Latvia (Licite and Jansons), Norway (Tomter), Romania (Marin), Slovenia (Hočevar), Spain (Pino Díaz), Sweden (Söderberg), Switzerland (Lanz), EU/Joint Research Centre (San Miguel).

### **2. Sessions**

Working Group 1 met in 4 sessions, one as a joint session with WG3:

- Session 1, Thursday, 2 December, 13:45-17:15: questionnaire;
- Session 2, Friday, 3 December, 09:00-12:00: questionnaire and work plan;
- Session 3, Friday, 3 December, 13:00-13:30: joint session with WG3;
- Session 4, Friday, 3 December, 13:30-14:30: questionnaire and work plan.

### **3. Questionnaire**

On the basis of the draft (23.11.2004) elaborated and distributed by the task force with representatives from Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland (Chair) and comments already received before the meeting from Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Slovenia and Spain, WG1 discusses and approves the questionnaire with changes (see Annex 1) during the meeting.

The following important items were handled in the general discussion on the questionnaire:

- The aim of the questionnaire is (a) to find interfaces or bridges and not (b) to harmonise methods (some questions need re-formulation to make this point clear);
- The questionnaire is targeted to countries with sample based inventory, countries with standwise inventory will give only a short description of their system;
- One expected output of the questionnaire is to optimise data provision by the NFIs in order to compile examples of harmonised tables; data provision, however, will be on fully voluntary basis;
- The final questionnaire should be designed in such a way, that the possibility is always given to the respondent to add explanations what is causing further differences;
- The questionnaire focuses on forest land, but we ask also for national forest categories, which enter into the FAO forest and other wooded land (OWL) definition;
- If a change of inventory system has or is occurring, we ask the countries to report old and new inventory systems;
- A question from WG3 is integrated into the questionnaire.

### **3A. Timetable Questionnaire**

The following timetable has been accepted by the working group:

- Comments as soon as possible;
- Distribution of questionnaire by end of December or beginning of January 2005;
- Replies by the end of January;
- First rough review in February;
- Analyses in March by STSM (host: WSL, Birmensdorf, Switzerland);
- First results available in April meeting.

### **3B. Cooperation with WG2 and WG3**

In a short joint meeting with WG3 it has been agreed that the inclusion of additional variables from WG3 into the questionnaire of WG1 has to be postponed. WG2 provides a simple question (related to soils), which will be added to the WG1 questionnaire.

### **3C. Distribution of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire is distributed as a set of MS-EXCEL files, which facilitates further analysis. Reformulation (Lanz, CH), Finalisation (Korhonen, FI).

## **4. Work plan**

The main tasks for the year 2005 are:

- compile questionnaire results;
- find differences between international and national definitions and threshold values and their impact on the forest area and volume estimates.

The draft publication strategy (December 3, 2004) of the action is evaluated:

- analyses of questionnaire and report by end of 2005 will be achieved;
- reporting by working groups rather than for the whole Action;
- first examples of harmonised results by mid of 2006 should be achieved, including voluntary examples of effect of threshold values;
- Field manual translation: EU automatic translator may be tested.

The working group agreed on the following important items for the future work:

- The expansion of the questionnaire to Other Wooded Land and other target variables should be considered (and relatively easily feasible);
- Studies on the influence of threshold values will be one of the most important next steps;
- Discussion on methods to assess the quality of estimates (standard errors and biases) should be launched;
- An important extension to the now addressed target variables are volumes and number of stems by diameter classes;
- Each country should start to find ways to calculate harmonised results, and review existing or initiate new case studies in these directions;
- An analysis on how the sampling designs (e.g. use of remote sensing) influence the estimates is needed.

## **5. Harmonisation level on the definition of forest**

Each country briefly described definitions of forest that are applied in the NFI. Several gaps in the harmonisation was identified, detail listed in Annex 2.

## **Annex 1. Detailed comments on the questionnaire**

### General

- Introduction needs improving (with received written comments)
- Add FAO Forest definition: link to web-page
- Headers should contain meta data, not inventory results (like mean volume)

### Part A

- The concept of forest type OK, but reformulate the terminology; ask which national categories the FAO Forest & OWL consists of, and if there are several categories with different inventory, ask to describe each inventory (however, questionnaire covers only forest land)
- Add question: is your country replying FRA
- A1-A4 needs modification/changes
- A5 OK
- A9, A10 leave out
- A11 OK
- A12 OK, but should be in the header? What national categories you have in FAO Forest, OWL, Do you have other categories?

### Part B

- If similar for living & dead, one description is enough: add both option
- B1.4 take out
- Add: not included in specific species list
- B2.6-B2.7: only one of these
- stump questions out
- commercial definition out

### Part C

- In the introduction add option: height prediction as one step
- C5 vs. C8 OK as it is now
- No need to include biomass or carbon

### Part D

- clusters rather than trakts
- add clarification on phases and stages on introduction

### Part E

- Question E1-2 needs clarification
- Question E1-3 and E1-4 should be modified to: What is the standard error for forest area/volume estimate at country level

## **Annex 2. Forest definitions applied in NFIs**

- Austria: National definition, threshold value 30 % crown cover for the moment
- Great Britain: 20 % crown cover
- Sweden: Both national and FAO definition in use nowadays, for the old NFI data FAO forest definition estimated with the help of other variables
- Czech Republic: National definition, threshold value 20 % crown cover, 400 sq. m. area, minimum height limit, no comparable data available
- Spain: FAO definition in use, for Other Wooded Land no field plots
- Hungary: National definition based on limited species list & canopy cover limit (15 %), information for other land uses available
- Latvia: National definition in use: crown cover 20 %, 7 m height limit
- Romania: National definition in use: designated areas, no sampling on other areas but for these areas some old data exist
- Italy: FAO definition in use, a case study on the old definition vs. FAO has been done
- Iceland: No final decision, probably FAO definitions will be selected
- Estonia: National definition in use, related to productivity, do not have data for swamps
- Norway: Both definitions in use: since 1994 crown cover estimated and can be applied for FAO definition, in the new NFI directly assessed in the field
- Slovenia: National definition in use, probably close to FAO but a specific problem may be when to regard abandoned agriculture land as forest
- Denmark: FAO definition in use
- Germany: cannot recalculate according to FAO definition now
- France: FAO definition in use, but a list of specific species limits slightly, areas planted for fruit production excluded
- Switzerland: national definition in use, estimates on difference to FAO exist, need for an additional study exists
- Finland: both definitions have been used since 1998, for FRA2000 FAO forest classes were estimated and later was found that the estimation procedure was not very successful