

**Voluntary National Reports on the Implementation of IPF/IFF Proposals for Action to the
Fifth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)**

**National Report to the Fifth 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

- assessment of the IPF/IFF proposals for action in the national context

Norway has conducted an assessment of implementation of international forest related decisions and recommendations addressed for implementation at country level¹. The assessment covers the IPF/IFF proposals for action, decisions from UNFF1-3, recommendations in the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity under the Convention on Biological Diversity, CBD as well as all resolutions and the Vienna declaration from the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, MCPFE. Dealing with decisions and recommendations from these three forest processes jointly, the Norwegian relevance, priority and status for implementation both domestically and in cooperation with other countries is considered. The assessment was commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture and conducted by a project group at the Department of Ecology and Natural Resource Management, at the Agricultural University of Norway. Relevant stakeholders have contributed to different parts of the work. The report is recently circulated to a broad range of stakeholders for comments. For a summary of the results see the attached “Annex NORWAY”. This annex is identical to the annex to the Norwegian response to the “Voluntary questionnaire to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests”.

Annex NORWAY presents the results as they appear in the commissioned report, and do not necessarily reflect the views of Norwegian authorities.

As Norway has submitted national reports according to the proposed format both to UNFF3 and UNFF4, we do not provide any additional information on topics dealt with at those two sessions in this report. It should nevertheless be noted that the assessment just mentioned, analyses the degree of Norwegian implementation of the 16 UNFF elements and may contribute with additional information on some of the topics.

Because our report to the second session was quite general, without specific mentioning of the topics dealt with at that session, we do provide some more information on these issues.

- development and implementation of your national forest programme or similar national policy framework for forests,

Since reporting to UNFF4, a draft of a new Forestry Act is sent on a formal hearing to various Ministries, as a last step before it will be submitted for consideration by the Parliament.

The analysis of implementation of forest related decisions and recommendations, reported in “Annex NORWAY”, presents the status of Norwegian implementation of a National forest programme and points to some shortcomings in this work.

¹ Reference: Lindstad, BH, Solberg, B & Trømborg, E. 2004. En analyse av norsk oppfølging av internasjonale beslutninger og anbefalinger knyttet til skogsektoren. INA Fagrapport 4. 115 pages. [In Norwegian with English summary: An Analysis of Norwegian Implementation of International Forest Related Decisions and Recommendations] Available at: <http://www.nlh.no/ina/publikasjoner/fagrapport/index.htm>

- international cooperation, including development and implementation of partnerships,

Norway has provided funding for participation of developing country representatives at UNFF sessions and country- and organisation-led initiatives, and do provide support to forest-related issues through FAO, ITTO as well as GEF. According to information collected through the assessment of Norwegian implementation (see Annex NORWAY), funding to forest-related bilateral projects has decreased from 2000 to 2003. Unfortunately, funding to forest-related projects through GEF and in bilateral projects is difficult to separate in integrated projects where forest issues are only one element. The exact funding to forest-related projects or the changes in funding over time is thus difficult to quantify accurately.

- mechanisms or initiatives to facilitate stakeholder participation, including indigenous and local communities, in forest sector planning, decision-making and/or forest management.

Participation by stakeholders was both a goal and a means in the analysis of Norwegian implementation (see “Annex NORWAY”). Different groups were invited to an initiating meeting, encouraged to provide information and viewpoints during the drafting process, and are invited to give their viewpoints on the final report. Relevant groups and individuals were continuously getting updated information via e-mail. In an attempt to reach new groups, a link to a web page inviting general inputs were provided at different web pages dealing with forest issues.

Mechanisms and initiatives on stakeholder participation are included in the reports to UNFF3 and UNFF4, and as “promoting public participation” is one of the 16 UNFF elements, the status of implementation is reported in the assessment of Norwegian implementation (see element 2 in “Annex NORWAY”).

One new development may be mentioned; in the draft of a new Forestry Act it is proposed that people in general should have the opportunity to report violation of the law to the police. In the existing act, only forest authorities have this opportunity. Such a change would improve the influence of stakeholders in forest management substantially.

Implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to thematic issues of UNFF 2

Combating deforestation and forest degradation

The Norwegian forests have a relatively strict legal protection against changes in land use. The National Forest Inventory of Norway provides comprehensive information on forest area, resources and condition. Results show that forest area in Norway is stable or slightly increasing, and that the forest is healthy and in good growth and condition. National policies and strategies for underlying causes of deforestation are thus not applicable. Still it is an important aspect of the policy to enhance public awareness of the multiple values of forests.

Forest conservation and protection of unique types of forest and fragile ecosystems

A technical evaluation of the current situation on protected forest areas in Norway was carried out by the Norwegian Nature Research Institute (NINA) and the Norwegian Forest Research Institute (SKOGFORSK) in 2002. The authors suggested that the level of strictly protected forest reserves should

be considerably increased in order to secure biodiversity, areas free from disturbance and reference areas for future generations. The government recognizes the need for an extension of strictly protected forests areas. Funding for establishing new protected areas has increased the last two years, and the area is expanded.

In addition to strictly protected areas, Norway has a wide spectre of measures aimed at protecting fragile ecosystems. Approximately 20 % of the forest area in Norway is defined as protective forests. In protective forests, the management is clearly directed to protect forest ecosystem functions, or to protect infrastructure and managed natural resources against natural hazards.

As mentioned in earlier reports to UNFF, there are different processes ongoing in Norway dealing with related topics. Examples of ongoing work that may influence forest conservation and protection in the future are the program for registration and monitoring of biodiversity and an evaluation of the legislation on biological diversity.

Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover

Recommendations related to this element are considered not applicable domestically. In the assessment of Norwegian implementation (Annex NORWAY) it was found that a limited number of Norwegian development projects are dealing with low forest cover countries.

III. Preparation of the Report

A draft of this report was prepared by the project group at the Agricultural University of Norway conducting the assessment of Norwegian implementation of forest-related international decisions and recommendations. The draft was sent for comments to a selection of government agencies and stakeholder groups.