

## AN ANALYSIS OF NORWEGIAN IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL FOREST RELATED DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS – SUMMARY OF RESULTS

### 1. Introduction

This annex summarizes the results from an analysis of Norwegian implementation of international forest related decisions and recommendations. The study was commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture, and conducted by a project group at the Department of Ecology and Natural Resource Management, Agricultural University of Norway in the period January to August 2004.

*The work and its results are presented here according to the commissioned report<sup>1</sup>, and the results do not necessarily reflect the views of Norwegian authorities. In the autumn of 2004, Norwegian stakeholders in forest management are invited to submit their comments to the results presented in the report.*

The analysis covers decisions and recommendations from the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, as well as the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity under the Convention of Biological Diversity, and the Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe. The assessment therefore includes more recommendations and decisions than the IPF/IFF proposals for action, and this should be kept in mind when interpreting the results, as it may influence the overall level of implementation.

A short presentation of the processes is included in the main report, to provide background information and to increase the general knowledge among forest stakeholders in Norway.

The analysis builds on former work in support of implementation of various forest related decisions and recommendations, most notably Pülzl (2002, 2003) and AFFA/ProFor (2003). In accordance with the 'terms of references' from the Ministry, the decisions and recommendations from all the processes are organized according to the 16 elements put forward in the Plan of action of the United Nations Forum on Forests (E/2001/42/rev.1, E/CN.18/2001/3/Rev.1).

Participation of stakeholders has been both a goal and a means in the analysis. The work has been conducted in accordance with the principles of a national forest programme, focusing specifically on participation. A wide group of stakeholders has provided inputs at different stages of the work: (i) in an orientation meeting by the Ministry before the work started, (ii) by commenting on a working draft of the classification of all the decisions and recommendations in accordance with the 16 elements, (iii) providing information on ongoing and planned activities with relevance to the various commitments, (iv) responding to draft conclusions presented at a working seminar, as well as (v) commenting on a draft report.

The study has three main objectives. In this summary of results, the main focus is on part three. The first two parts are briefly described before turning to the results of part three.

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<sup>1</sup> Reference: Lindstad, B. H., 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>

The *first part* of the study systematizes and describes international forest related decisions and recommendations meant for national implementation. The decisions/recommendations are presented in a simplified manner, with references to all the original documents from the various processes. All IPF/IFF proposals for action, relevant decisions of UNFF 1, 2 and 3<sup>2</sup>, all the activities of the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity under the CBD as well as the Vienna declaration and all the 17 MCPFE resolutions are taken together and translated to sub-elements under the 16 thematic elements. The classification draws upon the work by AFFA/WorldBank (2003), but is modified to include resolutions from the Ministerial Conference on Protection of Forests in Europe and to better reflect the Norwegian situation. In the classification and descriptions under 16 elements, relevance to Norwegian implementation both within and outside of the country is assessed, and primary and secondary addressees are recorded.

The *second part* consists of mapping the Norwegian efforts and activities with relevance to the 16 thematic areas with sub-elements, described in the first part of the study. Relevant activities – ongoing and planned - were mapped through interviews and written sources.

In the *third part*, a gap analysis is conducted. Based on the first two parts of the study, areas where national implementation<sup>3</sup> - within and outside of Norway - is seen to fall behind international recommendations, are identified and described. The overall objective has been a consistent treatment of decisions and recommendations as well as the mapped Norwegian activities.

The classification of “degree of implementation” is based on Pülzl (2002, 2003), but modified to be applicable at a more general level. While Pülzl (2002) assessed degree of implementation for each and every IPF/IFF proposal for action, this analysis assesses degree of implementation for national and international elements within each of the 16 thematic areas. The following classification is used:

Degree of implementation	Requirement
Fully implemented	All substantial aspects are dealt with
Largely implemented	One or more of the substantial aspects are dealt with
Partly implemented	Some of the substantial aspects are only partly dealt with
In preparation	In preparation to be dealt with
Not addressed	Not addressed

## 2. Results – implementation

### 2.1 General

The analysis reveals that Norway to a considerable extent has implemented the decisions and recommendations from the three forest related processes. Most of the thematic areas are considered to be ‘fully implemented’ or ‘largely implemented’ by Norway, and none are given lower score than ‘partly implemented’<sup>4</sup>. Generally, implementation seems to be better within Norway than for aspects outside the country.

Here, elements considered to be ‘partly implemented’ for either national or international aspects are briefly highlighted. Statuses for implementation of all the 16 elements are reported in 2.2.

For *national elements* two thematic areas are considered to be ‘partly implemented’: (i) criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management and (ii) forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems. Some aspects of these thematic areas are dealt with, while

<sup>2</sup> UNFF 4 decisions are not formally integrated as most of the data collection was finished prior to May 2004.

<sup>3</sup> “Compliance” may reflect the actual status better than “implementation” as all relevant activities are included in the analysis, i.e. there is no requirement that the Norwegian activities are caused by the international decisions/recommendations.

<sup>4</sup> This reflects the fact that when assessing implementation at this general level, some of the relevant aspects are always dealt with

there seem to be gaps in implementing criteria and indicators in national forest policy and in establishing representative areas of protected productive forests in Norway.

*International aspects* consist of development aid, trade and cooperation. Thematic areas where the international actions by Norway are considered to be ‘partly implemented’ include: (i) combating deforestation and forest degradation, (ii) rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover, (iii) rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands and the promotion of natural and planted forests, (iv) financial resources, and (v) international cooperation in capacity-building, and access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to support sustainable forest management. Development aid is central within these 5 thematic areas, and low priority of forest issues in Norwegian development aid contributes to the low scores.

## 2.2 Degree of implementation – UNFFs 16 elements

The degrees of implementation for national and international aspects of each of the 16 elements from the UNFF are briefly summarized. The information is relevant under some of the specific criteria in the “Voluntary Questionnaire to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international agreement on forests at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests”, particularly (a(i)). Also, this approach may contribute with additional information on some of the topics dealt with at earlier UNFF sessions and reported in the national reports to UNFF 2, 3 and 4 from Norway.

### *Element 1: Formulation and implementation of national forest programmes*

National aspects: The Ministry of Agriculture is referring to a number of forest policy processes in Norway as the national forest programme. Some of the processes are prepared in another setting and some years back. Limited participation (sometimes by invitation) and plans for evaluation and adaptive changes result in some shortcomings on process-related aspects. On the other hand, most of the substance-related aspects regarding NFPs are covered in the forest policy. Overall, assessed status is largely implemented.

International aspects: Norway’s active involvements in regional and international processes on NFPs are contributions, while lack of support to NFPs in developing countries is a shortcoming. Overall, the status is assessed to be largely implemented.

### *Element 2: Promoting public participation*

National aspects: Consultations with relevant groups are common, as well as some decision making in boards and committees. A private-public partnership (Living Forests) is an example of a more participatory process. A shortcoming in participation is to include wider groups of stakeholders through increasing awareness of public goods associate with forests. Status: Largely implemented.

International aspects: Public participation is central in development assistance in general, while forest issues are only briefly mentioned in a plan of action for Norwegian development assistance in agriculture. Status: Largely implemented.

### *Element 3: Combating deforestation and forest degradation*

National aspects: Forests in Norway are in an international perspective not threatened by deforestation or degradation. Rather they have juridical protection against transformation to other uses, and have good vitality. Status: Fully implemented.

International aspects: The recommendations on this element focus on causes for deforestation/degradation and support to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to handle related problems. There are examples of assistance projects from Norway, but very limited activities. The status is thus assessed to be partly implemented.

*Element 4: Traditional forest-related knowledge, TFRK*

National aspects: The historical importance of forests and forestry is not a subject of controversy in Norway. A proposed act on nature resources in Finnmark county is of relevance to indigenous peoples rights in natural resource management. The focus on TFRK in research and education may fall behind when compared to the international recommendations. Status: Largely implemented.

International aspects: The recommendations for international activities are not very specific, and Norway does support some projects. Status: Largely implemented.

*Element 5: Forest-related scientific knowledge*

National aspects: Forest-related scientific knowledge has a long and extensive history in Norway. A challenge in relation to the international recommendations is to improve the connections between research and policy development and planning. Status: Largely implemented

International aspects: Norway is funding research projects through bilateral development support and contribute to research through CGIAR/CIFOR. Status: Largely implemented.

*Element 6: Forest health and productivity*

National aspects: National monitoring systems, juridical instruments and economic incentives contribute to promote forest health and productivity. Some of the recommendations in CBD Work programme on forest biological diversity are more demanding. Status: Largely implemented.

International aspects: The recommendations are rather general, and Norway contributes to ongoing processes. Status: Largely implemented.

*Element 7: Criteria and indicators, C&Is, of sustainable forest management*

National aspects: Norway has participated in the European work on criteria and indicators, and has reported according to the MCPFE C&Is. In a private-public partnership, Living Forests, national C&Is were developed in 1998 building on the MCPFE C&Is. The Living Forests standards were developed at the same time, and afterwards the main focus has been on the standards.

The C&Is do not seem to be utilised nationally, as they are not mentioned in forest policy documents and neither used for developing nor evaluating the national forest policy. Because national implementation of C&Is is a major issue within this element, the status is found to be: Partly implemented

International aspects: Norway is participating in the MCPFE and other processes on further developments of C&Is for SFM. Support to developing countries for work on C&Is is not well developed. Status: Largely implemented

*Element 8: Economic, social and cultural aspects of forests*

National aspects: A lot of aspects are relevant within this element, and most of them are taken into account in national forest policy. Valuation and information on all forest related goods and services could still be better integrated with decision making. Status: Largely implemented.

International aspects: Norway has supported a small number of projects on valuation in developing countries. Few recommendations and limited Norwegian activities result in status: Largely implemented.

*Element 9: Forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems*

National aspects: There are considerable activities to care for unique and vulnerable ecosystems in ‘protective forests’ and on the forest areas in general. An assessment of forest protection in Norway (Framstad et al. 2002) concluded that more productive forests should be protected. There is an increased focus on forest protection and more allocation of public funding, but there is also uncertainty about future funding for forest conservation, and some conflict on this matter. The status is thus assessed to be: Partly implemented.

International aspects: Participation in European level coordination and cooperation with neighbouring countries contribute in implementation. There are few recommendations, and very limited activities by Norway in developing countries. Status: Largely implemented

*Element 10: Monitoring, assessment and reporting, and concepts, terminology and definitions*

National aspects: Most traditional forest related aspects are well implemented. Some weaknesses in evaluation of national forest programmes, including the use of C&Is, are already mentioned under elements 1 and 7. Also, in monitoring and reporting of biodiversity in forests, recommended in the CBD, there are weaknesses. Overall status: Largely implemented.

International aspects: Norway participates in and contributes to further developments of these activities in Nordic, European and global settings, and has some projects in developing countries. Status: Largely implemented.

*Element 11: Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover*

National aspects: Not applicable.

International aspects: Norway has few projects on forest related issues in countries with low forest cover. Status: Partly implemented

*Element 12: Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands and the promotion of natural and planted forests*

National aspects: Given the national situation, recommendations on this issue are not considered to be of highest priority in Norway. Traditionally forest production has been the main focus, and gradually also ecological and social provisions are taken into consideration. The ‘protective forests’ (approximately XX per cent of the Norwegian forest area) contribute to protect both forests and related values. Status: Fully implemented

International aspects: The international aspects are concentrated on financial assistance to developing countries. Norway does support a few projects dealing partly with rehabilitation/restoration. Low priority of forest issues in development assistance, contribute to the status: Partly implemented

*Element 13: Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs*

National aspects: Forest cover is generally not at risk in Norway to day. There might be divergent views of the future importance attached to wood products versus other products and services, and therefore also different views on the ability of the current policy to balance competing demands. Overall the efforts to safeguard current and future demands are significant, including an increasing focus beyond traditional forest resources (timber and wood). Status: Fully implemented

International aspects: Few and general recommendations on the issues as well as some ongoing and planned relevant Norwegian activities result in status assessed to be: Largely implemented

#### *Element 14: Financial resources*

National aspects: Financial support has traditionally had a prominent role in national forest policy. The support schemes have been altered lately, providing more support to environmental measures and for increasing the area of protected forest and less to long-term investments, like planting. In choosing between long-term investments and environmental considerations, there are different points of view as to what is the right balance. Taking into consideration that the political system is dealing with those choices, the status is assessed to be: Largely implemented

International aspects: Norway has contributed with financial resources to forest related projects in many developing countries, but the support to such projects has shown a declining trend over the last 3 years. (The exact level and decline is not known because of some difficulties in classification of projects.) Support is also provided to international organisations like FAO, GEF, etc. Financial resources to international forest related issues are thus substantial. Still, the recent decline in bilateral assistance and the fact that forestry issues are not prioritized in the new plan on agriculture in development assistance, are considered to be shortcomings. Status: Partly implemented

#### *Element 15: International trade and sustainable forest management*

National aspects: There are considerable efforts nationally to ensure that trade in Norwegian forest products contribute to sustainable forest management, including work on certification. Although trade and environmental issues are complex and partly controversial topics, national status is considered to be: Fully implemented.

International aspects: A variety of issues are relevant under this heading, some mainly addressed to international organisations. Norwegian actors have been active in development of certification schemes and in work on international trade, but support (e.g. financially or by capacity-building) to improve developing countries' access to international markets has been low. Overall the status is assessed to be: Largely implemented

#### *Element 16: International cooperation in capacity building, and access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to support sustainable forest management*

National aspects: Not applicable.

International aspects: Norwegian activities are substantial, including focus on capacity building, environmentally sound technologies and support to women in development assistance. Thus, the general aspects seem to be covered by Norway, although the level of support may be discussed. The government's stated goal of increased development assistance in agriculture and related issues, may possibly result in more support also to forestry related projects, including for poverty eradication and sustainable development. Again, the lack of priority of forest issues in development assistance is at this stage considered to be a shortcoming. Status: Partly implemented.

### **3. Concluding remarks**

The purpose of the analysis was to describe forest related decisions and recommendations from the three processes, to map relevant Norwegian efforts and activities in relation to these, both within and outside of Norway, and based on this to assess the level of implementation for the 16 UNFF-elements. The current Norwegian performance is compared to the decisions and recommendations from the three processes assessed jointly.

The assessment is based on a consistent treatment of all the recommendations/decisions. There is no requirement that efforts are responses to international recommendations, and the purpose is not to compare the Norwegian efforts with the level of implementation by other countries. Natural conditions, market aspects, as well as socio-cultural conditions can lead to high levels of

implementation without specific activities, and that some aspects are not meaningful in a Norwegian context (e.g. countries with low forest cover). The study points to gaps in implementation without going into how compliance can be improved.

For some of the aspects, the current situation can be viewed differently by different people. The stringency of the commitments as well as the relevance/fit of activities may be interpreted differently, leading to different opinions on the status of implementation. The clustering of the commitments leaves some room for interpretation, but also makes the numerous recommendations more easily available to national stakeholders. The hearing on the report in the autumn of 2004 is important in this regard, as it may give new insights in the variation of views.

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