

# MAIN REPORT

## Mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the EU Forest Action Plan

Service Contract No. 30-CE-0227729/00-59

By an external evaluation team of

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## Glossary of terms

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Action                  | refers to 18 Key Actions of EU Forest Action Plan FAP indicated in COM(2006) 302 final, 15.6.2006  |
| Action Plan             | EU Forest Action Plan COM(2006) 302 final, 15.6.2006   |
| Activity                | refers to the 55 activities identified in the FAP Work Programme 2007-2011, and any additional activities carried out by the Member States. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Additional activity: refers to any additional activity of the Member States carried out in the context of the EU FAP in addition to the activities listed in the Work Programme 2007-2011</li><li>- Parallel activity: happens in parallel to EU FAP</li></ul>   |
| Coherence               | the extent to which the intervention does not contradict other interventions with similar objectives   |
| Effectiveness           | the extent to which the EU FAP objectives and intended results are achieved / are expected to be achieved  |
| Efficiency              | the extent to which outputs and/or the desired effects are achieved with the lowest possible use of resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, administrative costs, etc.)  |
| Forest sector           | Forest sector includes the following <i>Nomenclature statistique des Activités économiques dans la Communauté Européenne</i> NACE categories (02, 20, 21):<br>Section A: Agriculture, hunting and forestry<br>Group 02.0: Forestry, logging and related services<br>Section D: Manufacturing<br>Subsection DD: Manufacture of wood and articles in wood<br>Class 20.1: Sawmilling, planing, impregnation of wood<br>Class 20.2: Manufacture of wood panels:<br>Class 20.3: Manufacture of builders' carpentry and joinery<br>Class 20.4: Manufacture of wooden containers<br>Class 20.5: Manufacture of miscellaneous products of wood and cork, basketwork<br>Subsection DE: Manufacture of paper and paper products<br>Class 21.1: Manufacture of pulp, paper and paperboard<br>Class 21.2: Manufacture of articles of paper or paperboard |
| Forest-based industries | The EU forest-based and related industries comprise the following industrial sectors: woodworking (excluding wooden furniture), cork and other forest-based materials; pulp, paper and board manufacturing; paper and board converting; and printing   |
| Forestry (sector)       | Forestry includes the NACE Section A, Group 02.0 (see above "forest sector") classes 02.01-02.02:  |

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
|                    | <p>Class 02.01 Forestry and logging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Growing of standing timber: planting, replanting, transplanting, thinning and conserving of forests and timber tracts</li><li>- Growing of coppice and pulpwood</li><li>- Operation of forest tree nurseries</li><li>- Growing of Christmas trees</li><li>- Logging: felling of timber and production of wood in the rough such as pit-props, split poles, pickets or fuel wood</li><li>- Growing of vegetable materials used for plaiting</li></ul> <p>Class 02.02 Forestry and logging related service activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Forestry service activities: forestry inventories, timber evaluation, fire protection</li><li>- Logging service activities: transport of logs within the forest</li></ul> |
| Impacts            | <p>Ultimate outcomes of the EU FAP i.e. lasting effects of policy measures in the EU FAP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Expected impacts: Expected impacts are derived from the EU FAP general objectives: competitiveness, environment, quality of life and coordination, coherence and communication</li></ul>   |
| Intervention logic | <p>the logic of how measures will lead and contribute to the targeted objectives</p>  |
| Leading Actor      | <p>refers to bodies implementing the EU FAP; Leading Actor is the responsible actor (i.e. the Commission, the Standing Forestry Committee and/or the Member States) for an EU FAP activity as defined in the EU FAP work programme 2007-2011</p>  |
| Outputs (products) | <p>direct products or services which result from the activities of implementing the EU FAP</p>  |
| Relevance          | <p>the extent to which the EU FAP objectives are consistent with stakeholders' requirements, Member States' needs, global priorities and the Community policies</p>   |
| Results (outcomes) | <p>effects and outcomes attributable to the EU FAP outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Expected results (outcomes): Expected results are derived from the EU FAP specific objectives that are defined by the Key Actions</li></ul>  |
| Side-effects       | <p>Unintentional effects caused by the implementation of the EU FAP</p>   |
| Stakeholders       | <p>individuals and organisations who are directly and indirectly affected by the implementation and results of the EU FAP – in the report the target group “stakeholders” refers to the members of the Advisory Group on Forestry and Cork included with other stakeholders targeted with the mid-term evaluation surveys</p>   |



## List of Abbreviations

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| AC-FBI  | Advisory Committee on Community Policy regarding Forestry and Forest-based Industries      |
| AFOLU   | Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Uses (UNFCCC)   |
| AGFC    | Advisory Group on Forestry and Cork  |
| C&I     | pan-European Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management (MCPFE)             |
| CBD     | Convention on Biological Diversity   |
| CIP-IEE | EU's Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP): Intelligent Energy – Europe |
| CITES   | Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora            |
| COFO    | FAO Committee on Forestry  |
| COP     | Conference of Parties (UNFCCC)   |
| COST    | European Cooperation in Science and Technology   |
| DG      | Directorate General (Commission departments and services):                                 |
|         | DG AGRI      DG Agriculture and Rural Development  |
|         | DG COMP     DG Competition   |
|         | DG DEV       DG Development  |
|         | DG EMPL     DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities                          |
|         | DG ENLARG   DG Enlargement   |
|         | DG ENTR     DG Enterprise and Industry   |
|         | DG ENV       DG Environment  |
|         | DG ESTAT    Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the EU                                     |
|         | DG MARKT   DG Internal Market and Services   |
|         | DG REGIO    DG Regional Policy   |
|         | DG RTD       DG Research   |
|         | DG SANCO    DG Health and Consumers  |
|         | DG TRADE    DG Trade   |
|         | DG TREN     DG Transport and Energy  |
|         | JRC           Joint Research Centre  |
|         | SG            General Secretariat  |
| EAFRD   | European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development   |
| EEA     | European Environment Agency  |
| EESC    | European Economic and Social Committee   |
| EFDAC   | European Forest Data Centre  |
| EFFIS   | European Forest Fire Information System  |
| EFICP   | European Forest Information and Communication Platform                                     |
| EFMS    | European Forest Monitoring System  |
| ERDF    | European Regional Development Fund   |
| EU FAP  | EU Forest Action Plan  |

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| FAO     | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations             |
| FBI     | Forest-based Industries   |
| FCN     | Forest Communicators' Network (UNECE/FAO team of specialists)       |
| FLEG(T) | Forest Law Enforcement, Governance (and Trade)                      |
| FP      | Framework Programme FP6 / FP7                                       |
| FTP     | Forest-based sector technology platform                             |
|         | FTP NRA      National Research Agenda                               |
|         | FTP SRA      Strategic Research Agenda                              |
| GPP     | Green Public Procurement  |
| ha      | hectare   |
| ISG     | Inter-services' Group (Commission internal body)                    |
| LULUCF  | Land use, land-use change and forestry (UNFCCC)                     |
| MCPFE   | Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe       |
| MS      | EU Member State   |
| NFP     | national forest programme   |
| NGO     | non-governmental organisation                                       |
| NWFGS   | Non-wood forest goods and services                                  |
| OMC     | Open Method of Coordination   |
| PP      | Public Procurement  |
| R&D     | Research and Development  |
| REDD    | Reduced Emissions from Deforestation                                |
| RES     | Energy from Renewable Sources                                       |
| RD(P)   | Rural Development (Programme)                                       |
| RTD     | Research and Technological Development                              |
| SBSTA   | Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice<br>(UNFCCC) |
| SEIS    | Shared Environmental Information System                             |
| SFC     | Standing Forestry Committee   |
| SFM     | Sustainable Forest Management                                       |
| UN      | United Nations  |
| UNCCD   | Convention to Combat Desertification                                |
| UNECE   | United Nations Economic Commission to Europe                        |
| UNFCCC  | Framework Convention on Climate Change                              |
| UNFF    | United Nations Forum on Forests                                     |

## **Member State abbreviations**

|    |                |
|----|----------------|
| AT | Austria        |
| BE | Belgium        |
| BG | Bulgaria       |
| CY | Cyprus         |
| CZ | Czech Republic |
| DE | Germany        |
| DK | Denmark        |
| EE | Estonia        |
| EL | Greece         |
| ES | Spain          |
| FI | Finland        |
| FR | France         |
| HU | Hungary        |
| IE | Ireland        |
| IT | Italy          |
| LT | Lithuania      |
| LU | Luxembourg     |
| LV | Latvia         |
| MT | Malta          |
| NL | Netherlands    |
| PL | Poland         |
| PT | Portugal       |
| RO | Romania        |
| SE | Sweden         |
| SI | Slovenia       |
| SK | Slovakia       |
| UK | United Kingdom |

## 1 Introduction

The Council Resolution on a forestry strategy for the European Union was adopted in 1998. It established a framework for forest-related actions in support of sustainable forest management, based on the co-ordination of the forest policies of the Member States and Community policies and initiatives relevant to forests and forestry.

The Strategy emphasises the sustainable forest management (SFM) as defined by the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe and the multifunctional role of forests as overall principles for action. It states that forest policy lies in the competence of the Member States, but that the EU can contribute to the implementation of SFM through common policies, based on the principle of subsidiarity and the concept of shared responsibility. It also emphasises the implementation of international commitments, principles and recommendations through national or sub-national forest programmes or equivalent instruments, and active participation in all forest-related international processes, and stresses the need to improve co-ordination, communication and co-operation in all policy areas of relevance to the forest sector.

Implementation of the forestry strategy was reported by the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament in 2005. The consequent Council Conclusions invited the Commission, in close co-operation with the Member States and in consultation with stakeholders, to elaborate a proposal for an Action Plan. The Council recognised the need for greater coherence of forest-related policies:

*...the EU Forestry Strategy needs to be updated as a basis for the EU Forest Action Plan to take a proactive approach allowing the forest sector to enhance its competitiveness and economic viability, and to address the growing needs and expectations of society and the challenges of globalisation.*

As a response to the Council request, the EU Forest Action Plan (EU FAP) was put forward and adopted in 2006. It is based on the principles and elements identified in the Forestry Strategy for the EU. The Leading Actors responsible for implementing the plan in 2007-2011 are the Commission and the Member States.

The EU FAP covers actions concerning forest resources and their related ecology, economy and social aspects. It provides a framework for the implementation of forest-related actions at Community and Member State level, and serves as an instrument of co-ordination between different Community actions as well as between Community actions and forest policies of the Member States. The overall aim is to support and enhance sustainable forest management and multifunctional role of forests.

The EU FAP is to be evaluated at mid-term (2009) and after the five-year running period (2012). The aim of the mid-term evaluation of the EU FAP is to:

*...analyse if the implementation is on track for meeting the objectives of the Action Plan, whether these objectives have been met so far, if the Action Plan has led to any side effects and whether the instruments used are relevant, effective and*

*efficient. This analysis should also be carried out in the light of key developments for the forest sectors in the Member States, and at European and international levels.*

This report presents the results of the mid-term evaluation carried out by an external evaluation team during December 2008 – September 2009. Evaluation has been guided by a Steering Group consisting of representatives of the Commission i.e. the DGs involved in implementation of the EU FAP and lead by the DG Agriculture and Rural Development Evaluation unit.

The report presents results of the background studies, implementation inventory of the EU FAP and the evaluation of the Action Plan. In the beginning of the report a short introduction is given to the structure of the forest sector and the policy landscape in which the EU Forest Action Plan operates (Chapter 2). Forests have different functions in different parts of the EU. The role and character of the forest-based sector in the EU Member States varies considerably. The forest policy in the EU is largely a matter of national competence, and the institutional and political framework of the forestry policy is complex with several institutional players dealing with forest-related policies at European and international levels as well as in the EU Member States. The EU Forestry Strategy and the EU Forest Action Plan identify, as one of the substantial elements, that the international commitments, principles and recommendations should be implemented through national and sub-national forest programmes or appropriate instruments developed by the Member States. The Chapter 2 includes a short description of the relationship between the EU FAP and the national forest policies and national forest programmes as this was demonstrated by the Member States in the mid-term evaluation survey.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology used, as well as the data and information collected in the exercise. Chapter 4 presents the implementation of the EU FAP by describing progress in the 18 Key Actions defined in the EU FAP Work Programme 2007-2011. Chapter 5 is constructed according to the six evaluation themes and 11 evaluation questions of the mid-term evaluation. Each evaluation question includes analysis of the specific Key Action(s) and the effectiveness and efficiency of activities carried out so far. Evaluation questions include conclusions on effects achieved and effects expected towards the EU FAP objectives. Furthermore the extent to which the EU FAP is consistent with stakeholder requirements, Member State needs, global priorities, and Community policies is assessed. Chapter 6 concludes the analysis of the evaluation themes and recommendations for the EU FAP.

## **2 Structure of the forest sector in the EU and overview of the policy framework**

### ***2.1 Structure of the forest sector in the EU***

The forest sector includes forestry (forestry, logging and related services) and manufacturing of wood and articles of wood, and manufacturing of paper and paper products. This section gives a brief overview of the diversity of forests and forest-based activities in the EU.

#### **2.1.1 Forests in the EU**

Forests and other wooded land cover a total of 177 million ha in the EU27 i.e. 42% of the land area (see Table 1). In 2005, the countries with the highest coverage of forests and other wooded land were Sweden (31 million ha or 75% of its land area), Spain (28 million ha, 57%), Finland (23 million ha, 77%), France (17 million ha, 31%), Germany (11 million ha, 32%) and Italy (11 million ha, 37%). Together these six Member States accounted for more than two-thirds of the total forest area in the EU27. The lowest coverage of forests and other wooded land was found in Malta (1%), Ireland (10%), the Netherlands (11%) and the United Kingdom (12%).

Among the six Member States with the largest area covered by forests and other wooded land, the proportion of forest available for wood supply varied from 37% in Spain to 69% in Sweden, to 86% in Finland and to 99% in Germany. The total area of forests available for wood supply in EU27 is 129 million ha, i.e. approximately 73% of the total forests and other wooded land cover. A total of 27 million ha of forest area are protected<sup>1</sup>.

During 2000-2005 the forest area of the EU27 increased by an average of 696 000 ha (0.4%) per year. Not only is the forest area stable and slightly increasing, but also the standing volume of forest (the growing stock) has increased during the past decades. Annual fellings in the EU27 represent some 60% of the net annual increment, but the figures vary considerably from one country to another.

The natural forest types and forest cover as well as the use of forests vary considerably across the EU. Forests provide a multitude of goods and services; wood supply is one, but other uses are also important, such as natural hazard prevention, biodiversity and ecological values, recreation and tourism, cork or other forest products e.g. berries, mushrooms and herbs. Forests play multiple roles in society with social, economic, environmental, ecological and cultural functions.

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<sup>1</sup> As defined MCPFE management objectives and classes for protection of biodiversity and protection of landscapes and specific natural elements (MCPFE 2007)

**Table 1. Forest area, net annual increment and fellings, 2005.**

|                       | Forest & other wooded land |                   | Forest available for wood supply |                | Net annual increment<br>million m3<br>(over bark) | Fellings<br>million m3<br>(over bark) | Fellings,<br>% of net<br>annual<br>increment |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|
|                       | million<br>ha              | % of land<br>area | million<br>ha                    | % of<br>forest |   |                                       |  |
| <b>EU27**</b>         | <b>177.0</b>               | <b>42</b>         | <b>129.2</b>                     | <b>73</b>      | <b>764.0*</b>                                     | <b>460.8*</b>                         | <b>60*</b>                                   |
| <b>Belgium</b>        | 0.7                        | 23                | 0.7                              | 96             | 5.3   | 4.5                                   | 85   |
| <b>Bulgaria</b>       | 3.7                        | 34                | 2.6                              | 70             | 14.1  | 5.8                                   | 41   |
| <b>Czech Republic</b> | 2.6                        | 34                | 2.5                              | 95             | 20.5  | 17.2                                  | 84   |
| <b>Denmark</b>        | 0.6                        | 15                | 0.4                              | 61             | 5.2   | 1.8                                   | 35   |
| <b>Germany***</b>     | 11.1                       | 32                | 11.0*                            | 99*            | 122.0*  | 60.8                                  | 50*  |
| <b>Estonia</b>        | 2.4                        | 56                | 2.1                              | 89             | 11.0  | 5.7                                   | 52   |
| <b>Ireland</b>        | 0.7                        | 10                | 0.7                              | 92             | :   | :                                     | :  |
| <b>Greece</b>         | 6.5                        | 51                | 3.5                              | 53             | 3.8*  | 1.8                                   | 48*  |
| <b>Spain</b>          | 28.2                       | 57                | 10.5*                            | 37*            | 28.6*   | 19.1                                  | 67*  |
| <b>France</b>         | 17.3                       | 31                | 14.7                             | 85             | 102.5   | 56.6                                  | 55   |
| <b>Italy</b>          | 11.0                       | 37                | 8.9                              | 81             | 38.3  | 10.1                                  | 26   |
| <b>Cyprus</b>         | 0.4                        | 42                | 0.0                              | 11             | 0.0   | 0.0                                   | 16   |
| <b>Latvia</b>         | 3.1                        | 51                | 2.8                              | 90             | 16.5  | 11.3                                  | 68   |
| <b>Lithuania</b>      | 2.2                        | 35                | 1.8                              | 83             | 9.9   | 7.2                                   | 73   |
| <b>Luxembourg</b>     | 0.1                        | 34                | 0.1                              | 98             | 0.7   | 0.2                                   | 38   |
| <b>Hungary</b>        | 1.9                        | 22                | 1.7                              | 86             | 12.9  | 7.2                                   | 56   |
| <b>Malta</b>          | 0.0                        | 1                 | -                                | -              | -   | -                                     | -  |
| <b>Netherlands</b>    | 0.4                        | 11                | 0.3                              | 81             | 2.2   | 1.6                                   | 70   |
| <b>Austria</b>        | 4.0                        | 48                | 3.4                              | 84             | 31.3*   | 18.8*                                 | 60*  |
| <b>Poland***</b>      | 9.2                        | 30                | 8.4                              | 91             | 67.6  | 37.2                                  | 55   |
| <b>Portugal</b>       | 3.9                        | 42                | 2.0*                             | 52*            | 12.9*   | 13.3                                  | 103*   |
| <b>Romania</b>        | 6.6                        | 29                | 4.6*                             | 70*            | 34.6  | 15.9                                  | 46   |
| <b>Slovenia</b>       | 1.3                        | 65                | 1.2                              | 88             | 7.3   | 3.2                                   | 44   |
| <b>Slovakia</b>       | 1.9                        | 40                | 1.8                              | 91             | 12.0  | 9.0                                   | 75   |
| <b>Finland</b>        | 23.3                       | 77                | 20.0                             | 86             | 92.9  | 64.5                                  | 69   |
| <b>Sweden</b>         | 30.9                       | 75                | 21.2                             | 69             | 91.4  | 78.1                                  | 86   |
| <b>United Kingdom</b> | 2.9                        | 12                | 2.4                              | 83             | 20.7  | 9.9                                   | 48   |

Source: Eurostat

: Data not available

- Very small amount

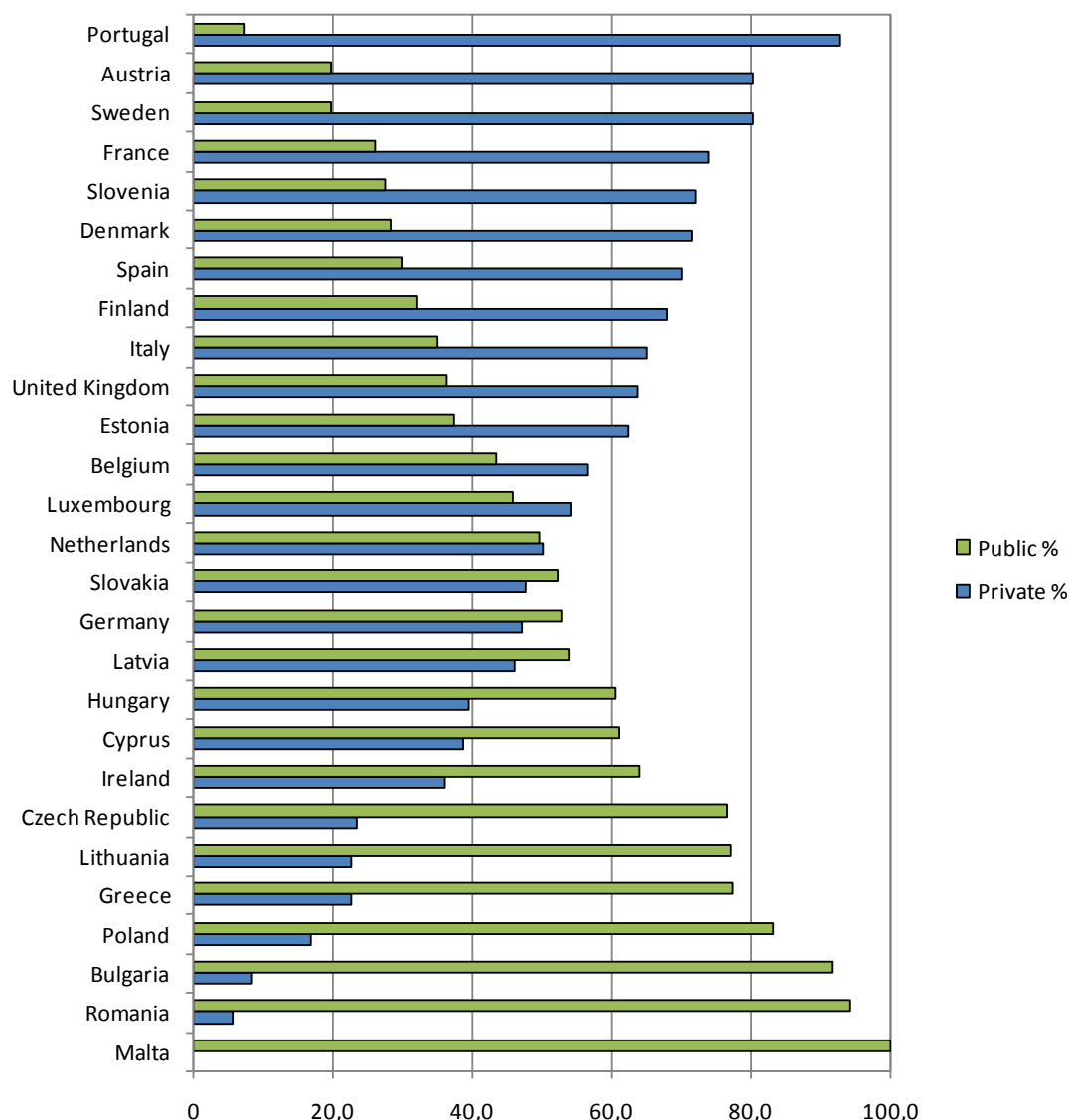
\* Estimated value

\*\* Ireland excluded for net annual increment and fellings

\*\*\* Data do not cover other wooded land

## 2.1.2 Forestry in the EU

The socio-economic conditions and the role that forests play for rural livelihoods also vary. Around 60% of the forests are in private ownership in the EU, while around 40% are publicly owned (Figure 1). There are approximately 15-16 million private forest owners in the EU27. The average private holding size is very small, often not exceeding 5 ha. In the Central and Eastern European countries new forest laws have been introduced as a result of constitutional changes in the transition from planned to market economies. This has led to important land tenure reforms, privatisation in the forest sector and an increasing number of private forest holdings in these countries. The EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007 mean that these issues are on the agenda in the EU; the enlargement has also resulted in a large increase in the forest area in the EU.



**Figure 1. Forest ownership shares public-private in the EU.**  
 (Source FAO 2005, category “other” is included in “private” for Spain, Finland, Estonia, Slovakia and Latvia). Note: the figures for Romania and Bulgaria may be outdated.

Situation differs across the EU regarding e.g. the forest owners’ formal training in forest management and the stage of development of markets and infrastructure. Fragmentation of forest ownership and high share of non-operational private forests without any management activities and lack of capacity in private forestry is a pervasive issue. Furthermore, the EU forestry is influenced by the effects of globalisation on political and institutional frameworks, societal developments, investments directed to emerging markets elsewhere and global environmental phenomena, particularly climate change. At the same time while the main source of revenues to finance forestry is industrial wood only, the multifunctional role of forests and demand for forest services is growing.

In the recent years, a rather substantial change has taken place both in Western Europe and in the countries which have recently joined the EU, in particular in the Central and



Eastern European countries. Restructuring of the state forest enterprises has led to workers in these enterprises being laid off and outsourcing of forest operations to private contractors. Overall, this has resulted in decrease of jobs in forestry, but also in a major reorientation in terms of job requirements. In 2005 there were 492 000 people employed in forestry, logging and related services in the EU27 (Eurostat). The significance of the forest sector for jobs and income is mainly not in forest management but in the wood processing industries such as sawmills, pulp and paper, and related production.

### **2.1.3 Forest-based industries in the EU**

The forest-based and related industries – i.e. woodworking (excluding wooden furniture), cork and other forest-based materials, pulp and paper manufacturing, paper and board converting, and printing – are among the most important sectors in the EU. In 2005, the EU27 forest-based industries included around 350 000 enterprises employing almost 3 million people. The forest-based sector represents some 15.1% of the total number of all manufacturing firms, and 8.6% of the manufacturing workforce. Small and medium-sized enterprises are predominant in the woodworking and printing sectors, while the manufacturing of pulp, paper and paperboard is a field of large firms – with several corporations operating on a global basis with production units in Europe, in Asia and in North and South America. The total turnover of the forest-based industries amounts to EUR 380 billion.<sup>2</sup>

The forest-based industry is based on renewable raw material resources and on efficient recycling. Wood is the main cost for many of these industries: in paper making wood represents more than 30%, and in the sawmill industry 65-70% of total costs<sup>3</sup>. Prices of the raw material vary considerably within the EU27 and also economic fluctuations affect the situation e.g. through currency rates. Average personnel costs in the forest-based industries of the EU27 in 2005 were EUR 29 100. There is considerable variation in the average annual personnel costs with highest average in Germany and Sweden (EUR 45 200 and EUR 44 000), and lowest in Bulgaria and Romania (EUR 2200 and EUR 2500).

Access to raw material – both domestic supply and import – is important for the forest-based industries. In 2008 the global economic crisis has affected the sector with decline in demand for forest products and decline in production during 2008 and early 2009. Wood energy is an exception in this trend, and the demand for wood energy is expected to continue growing. These developments in the manufacturing sector will affect the forest sector as a whole.

Besides wood, cork is an important forest product in the EU with approximately 1.7 million ha of cork oak forests (mainly in Portugal and Spain) accounting for 80% of the worldwide production of cork.

The EU forestry is closely connected with the forest industry, which makes it especially sensitive to changes in foreign direct investment, economic activity (value-added

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<sup>2</sup> Eurostat statistics in focus 74/2008

<sup>3</sup> Communication on innovative and sustainable forest-based industries in the EU, COM(2008)113

production, productivity, and employment), trade and technology/know-how. This has a direct effect on the economic viability and competitiveness of the European model of sustainable forest management. It also affects the multi-functional forestry i.e. secured provision of the many services that forests provide, often outside the markets and without market-based income streams. Also environmental issues – including the role in climate change mitigation – are becoming an increasingly important determinant of competitiveness for the forest sector.

## **2.2 Policy landscape around the EU FAP**

The EU FAP provides a framework for forest-related actions at the Community and Member State level and serves as an instrument of coordination between Community and the forest policies of the Member States. This section describes the policy landscape in which the EU FAP was defined and where it operates, and places it in context in relation to international processes and arrangements, to policy areas at the Community level, and to national forest policies.

### **2.2.1 International policy setting**

Since the 1990s both global processes and pan-European regional process have addressed forest-related issues and supported Sustainable Forest Management. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) i.e. the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 adopted the Forest Principles together with the Agenda 21 (Chapter 11. Combating Deforestation).

The **United Nations Forum on Forests** (UNFF), established in 2000 by United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to carry on and build on the work of the Intergovernmental Panel of Forests (IPF) and Intergovernmental Forum of Forests (IFF) processes 1995/1997. At its sixth session, in 2006, the UNFF agreed on four shared Global Objectives on Forests, focusing sharply on the implementation of sustainable forest management. The main outcome of the UNFF is the **Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests**, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2007.

The **Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests** (MCPFE) is a policy process which was started in 1990 with the aim to work towards the protection and sustainable management of forests throughout the pan-European region. A total of five ministerial conferences during 1990-2007 have identified key forest policy issues and concluded resolutions as political commitments of the European countries – the latest conference took place in Warsaw in 2007. In total 46 countries, including all EU Member States and the European Union have committed to the cooperation and policy deliberations. Major outputs are e.g. the definition of the MCPFE approach to sustainable forest management (Helsinki Resolution 1, 1993) and to national forest programmes in Europe (Vienna resolution 1, 2003) as well as the pan-European Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Management. The MCPFE has contributed to the national forest policies as well as the EU Forestry Strategy and the EU FAP to this day.

The European Community and/or the individual Member States are signatories in other forest-related international agreements and conventions agreed on at UNCED. These include the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**, the **Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**, and the **Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** and its Kyoto Protocol. Furthermore commitments are made in the **International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA)** and the **International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)**.

Other important international organisations influencing the EU forest-related policies are the **World Trade Organization (WTO)**, and the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**, and at the pan-European level, the **United Nations Economic Commission to Europe (UNECE)**. The UNECE serves as the secretariat to the **Environment for Europe (EfE)**, which is a political process started in 1991 focusing on environmental protection and sustainable development in Europe.

The institutional and political framework of the forestry policy is a complex set with several institutional players dealing with forest-related policies at European and international levels as well as in the EU Member States. These international policy processes and instruments deal directly and indirectly with forests, and set a general framework in which the EU and national forest policies take place.

### **2.2.2 Community policy setting**

Given the fact that the Treaty establishing the European Community makes no provision for a specific common forestry policy and that the responsibility for forest policy lies with the Member States, the EU Forestry Strategy and the EU Forest Action Plan are based on the principle of subsidiarity and the concept of shared responsibility. At the same time there are a number of EU regulations and directives in other policy areas that are to be implemented by the Member States and that have a direct or indirect influence on forestry. This section presents the main policy areas related to forests and forestry in the EU with information on latest developments since the implementation of the EU FAP in 2007.

#### **Rural development policy**

The EU's rural development policy – the second pillar of the common agricultural policy – seeks to establish a coherent and sustainable framework for the future of rural areas. The overall principles of the EU Forestry Strategy, e.g. multifunctionality and sustainability, are in accordance with the EU rural development policy by bringing together economic, social and environmental objectives.

The **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)**<sup>4</sup> is the core instrument to achieve the objectives of the EU's rural development policy. The Rural Development Regulation is also the main instrument at the Community level for the implementation of the EU Forestry Strategy and the EU FAP. Forestry measures and forestry-related actions have been included in the rural development programmes 2007-

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<sup>4</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005, 20.9.2005

2013 of all Member States except Malta and Ireland<sup>5</sup>. It is envisaged that the rural development programmes will make around EUR 8 billion of EAFRD funds available for forestry measures, and together with the national co-funding the sum will amount to EUR 16 billion in 2007-2013. Under the Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005, the **Community guidelines for state aid in the agriculture and forest sector** aim to prevent distortions in competition and co-finance support for forestry by assuring consistency of State Aid with the Community's common agricultural and rural development policies and international obligations. The new comprehensive Community Guidelines for State Aid in the agricultural sector entered into force at the beginning of 2007<sup>6</sup>.

## Environment policy

The **Sixth Environment Action Programme** of the European Community (2002-2012)<sup>7</sup> includes issues of relevance to forestry, namely Climate Change, Nature and Biodiversity, Environment and Health. The **Renewed Sustainable Development Strategy** (SDS)<sup>8</sup> for an enlarged EU sets out how the EU will more effectively reach its sustainable development goals. The regulation for the **Financial Instrument for the Environment** (Life+)<sup>9</sup> was approved in 2007. The Life+ programme supports environmental and nature conservation projects throughout the EU, and the measures to be financed in 2007-2013 include also projects that e.g. develop environmental information sources through monitoring (including forest monitoring), and support forest fire prevention awareness and training campaigns.

The creation of the **Natura 2000** network is the cornerstone of Community nature conservation policy. The network consists of "Special Protection Areas" emanating from the **Birds Directive**<sup>10</sup> and "Special Conservation Areas" emanating from the **Habitats Directive**<sup>11</sup>. Measures taken pursuant to these directives are designed to maintain or restore, to a favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest. The EU Biodiversity Strategy was adopted in 1998 and related Action Plans in 2001. Most Member States have also developed, or are developing, their strategies and/or action plans. The Commission communication in 2006 **Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and beyond**<sup>12</sup> identifies key policy areas for action, and objectives and supporting measures: woodlands and forests are included in the objective of conserving and restoring biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider EU countryside.

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<sup>5</sup> Report on implementation of Forestry Measures under the Rural Development Regulation 1698/2005 for the period 2007-2013. DG AGRI H.4, March 2009

<sup>6</sup> Community guidelines for state aid in the agriculture and forestry sector 2007-2013 (OJ C 319 of 27.12.2006). Commission Regulation (EC) No 1857/2006, 15.12.2006.

<sup>7</sup> COM (2001) 31, 24.1.2001, and the Mid-term review of the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme COM(2007) 225 final, 30.4.2007

<sup>8</sup> Adopted by the European Council on 15/16 June 2006. European Council DOC 10917/06 and the 2009 Review of the European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development. COM(2009) 400 final, 24.7.2009

<sup>9</sup> Regulation (EC) No 614/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council, 23.5.2007

<sup>10</sup> Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds.

<sup>11</sup> Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

<sup>12</sup> COM(2006) 216 final, 22.5.2006 and the Mid-term Assessment of Implementing the EC Biodiversity Action Plan. COM(2008) 864 final, 16.12.2008

The **Water Framework Directive (WFD)**<sup>13</sup> sets need for coordinating policies on forest, agriculture and water sectors. The overall aim of the water directives is to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater. The wider objectives are to promote sustainable water use and to mitigate the effects of floods and droughts.

The **Commission communication addressing the challenges of deforestation and forest degradation to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss** – the so-called REDD communication<sup>14</sup> – was put forward in 2008. The EU has played a key role in the development of the 1992 UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol, which was agreed in 1997. In 2000 the Commission launched the European Climate Change Programme (ECCP). In 2007-2009 the Commission took forward a number of initiatives: in 2007 the **Green Paper Adapting to climate change in Europe – options for EU action**<sup>15</sup> and in 2009 **White Paper – Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action**<sup>16</sup>. The year 2009 is a crucial year in the international effort to address climate change, culminating in the United Nations Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 15) in Copenhagen in December. Energy and climate change policies go hand in hand: the EU is committed to reduce its overall emissions to at least 20% below 1990 levels by 2020, and ready to scale up this reduction to as much as 30% under a new global climate change agreement.

## Energy policy

The Commission **Biomass Action Plan**<sup>17</sup> adopted in 2005 sets out measures to increase the development of biomass energy from wood, wastes and agricultural crops by creating market-based incentives to its use and removing barriers to the development of the market. The **Renewable Energy Road Map** in 2006 set a strategy to enable both increasing security of energy supply and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It improves the legal framework for promoting renewable electricity, requires national action plans that establish pathways for the development of renewable energy sources including bioenergy, creates cooperation mechanisms to help achieve the targets cost effectively and establishes the sustainability criteria for biofuels.

The **Climate and Energy Package**<sup>18</sup> was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in 2009. It aims at ensuring that EU Member States meet targets relating to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases by 20% before 2020, including to ensure a level of 20% renewable energy in the total EU energy consumption before 2020 as well as to increase the proportion of renewable energy in the transport sector by 10% before 2020. As a part of this package a **Directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources** – the so-called RES Directive<sup>19</sup> – was approved in June 2009.

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<sup>13</sup> Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1-73)

<sup>14</sup> COM(2008) 645 final, 17.10.2008

<sup>15</sup> COM(2007) 354 final, 29.6.2007

<sup>16</sup> COM(2009) 147 final, 1.4.2009

<sup>17</sup> COM(2005) 628 final, 7.12.2005

<sup>18</sup> COM(2008) 30 final, 23.1.2008

<sup>19</sup> Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources and amending and subsequently repealing Directives 2001/77/EC and 2003/30/EC. (OJ L 140, 5.6.2009, p. 16-62)

## Industrial policy

Forest-based industries and thereby industrial policy are closely linked to forestry policy. The Communication on the State of the Competitiveness of the EU Forest-Based and Related Industries (1999) was followed in 2008 with the **Communication on innovative and sustainable forest-based industries in the EU**<sup>20</sup>. The so-called FBI communication underscores the importance of forest-based industries for the EU's Growth and Jobs Strategy. The FBI communication is complementary to the EU FAP.

## Research and technological development policy

The **Seventh Framework Programme (FP7)**<sup>21</sup> is the EU's main instrument for the funding research in 2007-2013. It contains four specific programmes, corresponding to four major objectives of European research policy: cooperation, ideas, people, and capacities. Topics related to the multifunctional management of forests and to the forest-based industries are found in the work programmes of the programme cooperation, under the thematic priorities: priority 2, "Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, Biotechnology", priority 5 "Energy", and priority 6 "Environment (incl. climate change)", and also in specific activities covering a wider field of research in support of Community policies.

## Development cooperation policy

The **Financing Instrument for Development Cooperation**<sup>22</sup> 2007-2013 aims to eradicate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals *inter alia* by promoting sustainable development through environmental protection and sustainable management of natural resources, including protection of biodiversity, and of forests, including activities for the conservation and sustainable management of forests with active participation of local communities and forest-dependent peoples.

As regards sustainable forest management, the Community supports efforts on combating illegal logging, giving particular attention to implementation of the **EU Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT)**<sup>23</sup>. A key element of the Action Plan is a voluntary scheme to ensure that only legally harvested timber is imported into the EU from countries agreeing to take part in the scheme. The Council adopted a Regulation in 2005<sup>24</sup> allows for the control of the entry of timber to the EU from countries entering into bilateral FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA) with the EU. In October 2008, the Commission published a **proposal for a regulation laying down the obligations of operators who place timber and timber products on the market**, the so-called due diligence proposal<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> COM(2008) 113 final, 27.2.2008

<sup>21</sup> Decision No 1982/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013)

<sup>22</sup> Regulation (EC) 1905/2006, 18.12.2006

<sup>23</sup> COM(2003) 251 final, 21.5.2003.

<sup>24</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 2173/2005, 20.12.2005

<sup>25</sup> COM(2008) 644 final, 17.10.2008

## Trade Policy

The EU has promoted the integration of sustainable development into international trade. The sustainable development objectives are taken into account in trade negotiations with third countries, and this refers also to forest-related questions – e.g. the generalised system of preferences (GSP) 2006-2015 introduced tariff preferences for trade with the developing countries with the aim to reduce poverty. Regulation (EC) 980/2005<sup>26</sup> applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences for 2006-2008 and regulation (EC) 732/2008 for 2009-2011 can apply e.g. to tropical wood products – goods that are classified as non-sensitive and imported from the preferred developing countries to the Community are exempt from import tariffs.

## Regional policy

EU Regional policy continues to support an integrated approach to regional development, considering the three dimensions of sustainable development and taking advantage of natural assets such as forests. One of the principal conditions for creating territorial cohesion in Europe is to ensure complementarity and balance between urban and rural areas. The **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**<sup>27</sup> can provide financial support for the implementation of specific actions of the EU Forest Action Plan in the Member States under the condition that these actions are coherent to the regional priorities of development and to the Community Strategic Guidelines. The cross-border, transnational and interregional projects on forests and forestry represent a genuine added-value of Cohesion Policy in this area. Some projects<sup>28</sup> explicitly mention the EU FAP as a background of their design while others deal with more recent topics such as forestry and climate change<sup>29</sup>. In addition natural risk prevention, such as forest fires, is recognised as a priority in the Community Strategic Guidelines and this has led to numerous concrete projects at regional and local level, often in cross-border or interregional co-operation.

## Plant health, plant protection and propagating material policy

EU Plant health, plant protection and propagating material policy is one of the policy fields that indirectly affects the forest sector. The main objectives of EU legislation are to protect the safety of feed and food derived from plants, to prevent the introduction and spread of organisms harmful to plants or plant products within the EU, and to regulate the trade of plants and plant products within the EU as well as imports from the rest of the world in accordance with international standards and obligations. Regarding the forestry sector, the following pieces of EU plant health legislation are to be considered the most influential ones: Council Directive 91/414/EEC<sup>30</sup>, Council Directive 2000/29/EC<sup>31</sup>, Council Directive 1999/105/EC<sup>32</sup>, and Regulation (EC) 396/2005<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 980/2005, 27.6.2005 and Council Regulation (EC) No 732/2008 of 22 July 2008

<sup>27</sup> Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, 5.7.2006

<sup>28</sup> E.g. the Interreg IIC 'Robinwood' project

<sup>29</sup> E.g. the Interreg IVB project 'ForesClim' and the Interreg IVC project FUTUREforest

<sup>30</sup> Council Directive of 15 July 1991 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market (91/414/EEC).

<sup>31</sup> Council Directive 2000/29/EC of 8 May 2000 on protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community.

<sup>32</sup> Council Directive 1999/105/EC of 22 December 1999 on the marketing of forest reproductive material.

<sup>33</sup> Regulation (EC) NO 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 February 2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin and amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC.

## **Other – institutions**

The **Joint Research Centre (JRC)** is a Directorate General of the European Commission, providing independent science and technology advice to European policy makers. All forestry and forest-related research projects are embedded in the activities of the JRC's Institute for Environment and Sustainability, Ispra, Italy.

**Eurostat**, the Statistical Office of the European Union is responsible for the collection, management and publication of data concerning forest products and trade statistics as well as of other statistics regarding the forest sector as a whole. Collection of forest statistics is carried out in cooperation of the Inter-secretariat Working Group on Forest Sector Statistics which brings together FAO, UNECE, and Eurostat. The primary tool for the co-operation is the annual Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire used by all three organisations.

The **European Environment Agency (EEA)** is an agency of the EU with the task to provide sound, independent information on the environment. It currently has 32 member countries. EEA's mandate is to help the Community and member countries make informed decisions about improving the environment, integrating environmental considerations into economic policies and moving towards sustainability, and to coordinate the European environment information and observation network (Eionet).

### **2.2.3 The EU Forest Action Plan**

The EU Forest Action Plan originates from the Council Resolution on a forestry strategy for the European Union (1998). It was prepared in 2006 in close cooperation between the Commission and the Member States, and in consultation with the stakeholders.

The EU FAP has an overall objective of supporting the multifunctional role of forests and to enhance Sustainable Forest Management in the Member States, allowing the EU to fulfil its international commitments relating to forests. The Actions are grouped under four specific objectives headings:

- (1) to improve the long-term competitiveness,
- (2) to improve and protect the environment,
- (3) to contribute to the quality of life, and
- (4) to foster coordination and communication.

These objectives are targeted with 18 Key Actions (see Figure 2). For implementation of the Action Plan a five-year work programme has been established for 2007-2011. It indicates 55 activities that will provide guidance to the Commission, Member States and stakeholders. The mid-term evaluation of the Action Plan in 2009 and a final evaluation foreseen in 2012 are an integral part of the implementation.

In the course of preparation of the EU FAP, the Commission and the Member States developed a common vision of forestry and of the contribution which forests and forestry make to modern society:



*Forests for society: long-term multifunctional forestry fulfilling present and future societal needs and supporting forest-related livelihoods.*

An action plan is a tool to coordinate actions related to the forestry sector, now run in parallel in different policy areas and at different levels of implementation, e.g. international and national levels.

There are no specific resources allocated for the implementation of the EU FAP, though the plan indicates a number of existing financing instruments (mainly the rural development funds, framework programme for research and development, but also several other sources) which could be utilised in implementing the EU FAP.

The EU FAP implementation makes use of existing structures. The Standing Forestry Committee (SFC)<sup>34</sup> is the Commission's comitology committee<sup>35</sup>. The committee was set up by a Council Decision in order to ensure closer and more constant cooperation in the forestry sector between the Member States and the Commission and thereby support forestry measures initiated under the Community agricultural structure and rural development policy<sup>36</sup>. The SFC consists of Member State representatives, mainly those of Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Forestry or Ministry of Environment representatives, but for some countries also regional representatives. The Advisory Group on Forestry and Cork (AGFC)<sup>37</sup> is an advisory committee of the Commission. The AGFC consists of representatives of producers (28 seats), traders (2), industry (11), workers (2), consumers (1) and environmental groups (4). The EU FAP mentions also cooperation with another advisory committee i.e. Advisory Committee on Community Policy regarding Forestry and Forest-based Industries<sup>38</sup>. The Commission's Inter-services' Group on Forestry (ISGF) is a cooperation body within the Commission, additional to the formal inter-service consultation process.

The action plan activities are to be implemented by the various departments (DGs) of the Commission and the Member States (incl. presidencies). Stakeholder participation is channelled mainly through the AGFC.

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<sup>34</sup> (89/367/EEC) Council Decision of 29 May 1989 setting up a Standing Forestry Committee

<sup>35</sup> [http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/comitology\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/comitology_en.htm)

<sup>36</sup> (89/367/EEC) Council Decision of 29 May 1989. Article 2:

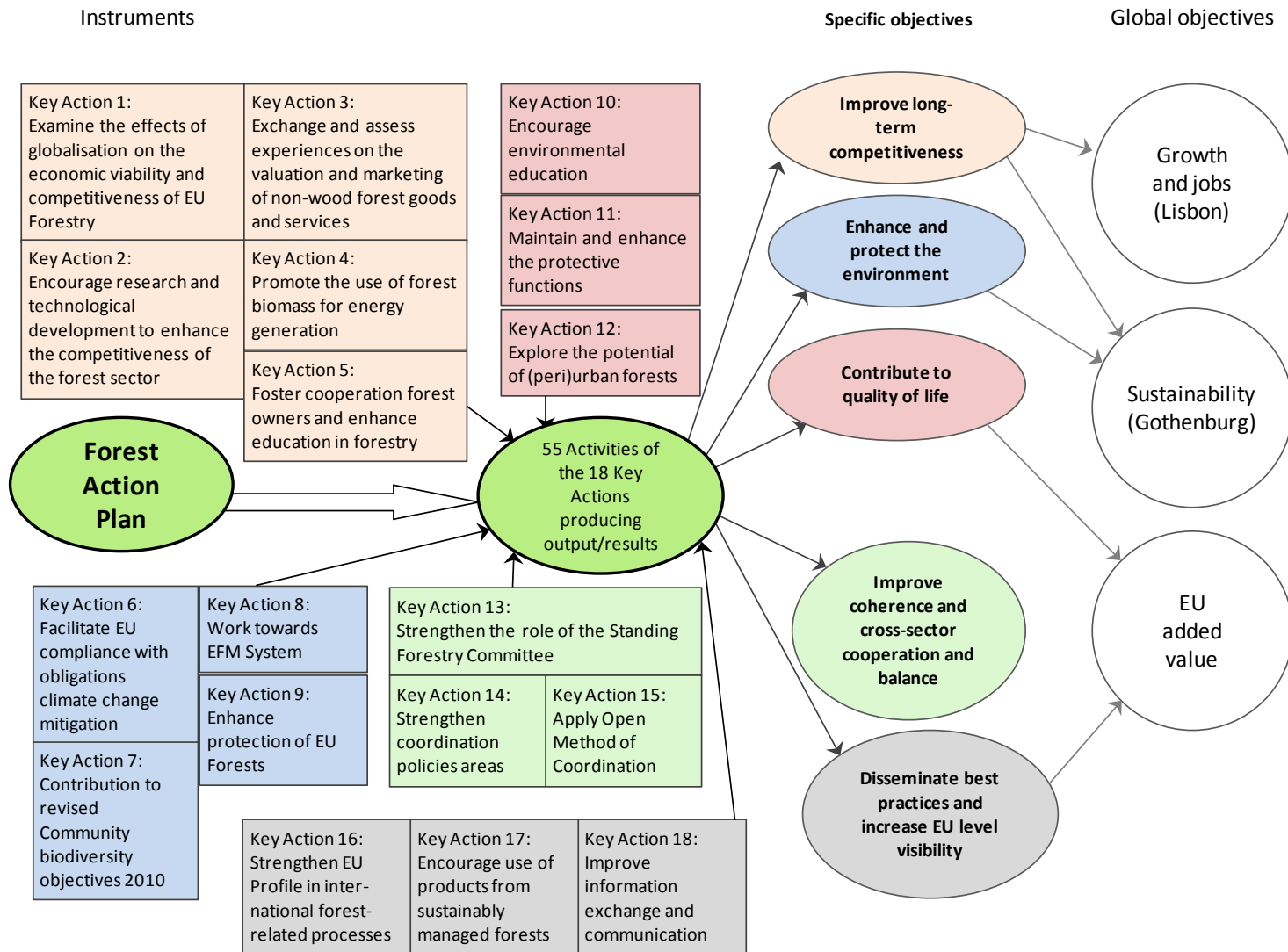
1. Taking account of Member States' forestry policies and measures and programmes relating thereto, of the role of the forestry sector in the context of agricultural structure and rural development policy and of the links between the forestry sector and the various Community policies, the Member States shall keep each other and the Commission informed, within the committee, of the situation and developments in the forestry sector and the relevant policies.

2. The Commission may consult the committee on any issue or aspect concerning the forestry sector arising from the various Community policies either on its own initiative or at the request of the representative of a Member State.

3. The Council, acting on a proposal from the Commission, may assign other duties to the committee in connection with Community measures affecting the forestry sector.

<sup>37</sup> (2004/391/EC) Commission Decision of 23 April 2004 on the advisory groups dealing with matters covered by the common agricultural policy

<sup>38</sup> (97/837/EC) Commission Decision of 9 December 1997 amending Decision 83/247/EEC setting up a committee on Community policy regarding forestry and forestry-based industries



**Figure 2. Overview of the EU FAP Key Actions and the specific objectives and global objectives.**

#### 2.2.4 National forest policies and NFPs in the EU and their relation to the EU FAP

The EU Forestry Strategy and the EU Forest Action Plan identify, as one of the substantial elements, that the international commitments, principles and recommendations should be implemented through national and sub-national forest programmes or appropriate instruments developed by the Member States. The mid-term evaluation collected information from the Member States and investigated the relationship between the EU FAP and the national forest programmes in the EU FAP.

The national forest programmes (NFPs) have been established in the EU27 in accordance with the pan-European process. Rather than being one approach, the NFPs cover a wide range of approaches to develop, program and implement forest policies in a country or a region<sup>39</sup>. NFPs can be formal or informal governmental processes, with the resulting documents formally adopted or not. Some countries identify their NFP as a set of policies or strategies addressing sustainable forest management.

Based on the inventory for the mid-term evaluation in 2009, few Member States indicate that there is a *direct influence* from the EU FAP to the national level processes – e.g. in Italy the NFP (2008) “Framework Programme for the Forest Sector” is strictly shaped around the EU FAP. For the NFP there will also be established a national, permanent body for the definition, coordination and information on forest policies called “Standing Forest Board”, similar to the SFC.

Several countries indicate similar approaches: the EU FAP has been utilised for *informing* the national process, e.g. checking the coherence between the EU and national level themes when preparing or updating the NFPs and the annual work plans. During 2007-2008 the EU FAP key actions have been considered and referred, together with the national developments e.g. in Czech Republic (NFP ratified in 2008), in Hungary (NFP started in 2008), Slovenia (NFP adopted in 2007) and Slovakia (NFP adopted in 2007 and the Action Plan for NFP in 2008). Also other countries indicate that the EU FAP has guided the national process, e.g. in reconsidering the priorities and actions in Bulgaria, Luxemburg, United Kingdom and Ireland.

Some responses show that the dialogue carried out in the EU FAP has had more of an *indirect effect* on the national processes, including contribution to also *other than forest sector* programmes – e.g. green procurement / public procurement, renewable energy (e.g. wood biomass and targets for forestry), Natura2000, and investment in research have been themes emphasised in the implementation of the EU FAP, and this also reflects an increasing emphasis placed on these themes at national level. This connection is made in Latvia, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain.

There are also Member States that see *low influence* from the EU FAP on their national policy and processes (e.g. Finland, Sweden, Lithuania and Poland). National actions are carried out as a result of long-term national forest policy, and the linkage from the EU FAP to the national level is not seen as significant, even though the goals and measures coincide.

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<sup>39</sup> State of Europe's Forests 2007. The MCPFE Report on Sustainable Forest Management in Europe. Jointly prepared by the MCPFE Liaison Unit Warsaw, UNECE and FAO. Warsaw, 2007.

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 General approach, scope and timeframe

The mid-term evaluation of the EU FAP consists of two parts:

- (1) a description of the implementation; and
- (2) an evaluation of the Action Plan.

The general conceptual approach to the study follows the general EU guidelines for evaluation, as outlined in Figure 3. The description of the implementation presents what activities have been taken, by whom and using which resources, as well as what outputs (concrete products and services) have been produced during the period of analysis. Evaluation concerns effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation, i.e. the implementation is assessed in relation to which results have already been achieved and which results and impacts are expected to be achieved by the EU FAP. Furthermore evaluation concerns also the relevance of the Action Plan, in other words the Action Plan is assessed in relation to the needs, problems and issues that the EU FAP is expected to address.

The evaluation covers the EU FAP – i.e. 18 Key Actions and 55 activities defined in the EU FAP work programme – at the Community level and in the 27 EU Member States. The description of the Community level implementation is based on the progress reports presented by the Commission as a part of the Standing Forestry Committee annual work programmes, and on the information collected by evaluation questionnaires and interviews. Member State activities – inclusive of any additional EU FAP activities – are investigated in a survey as part of the implementation review.

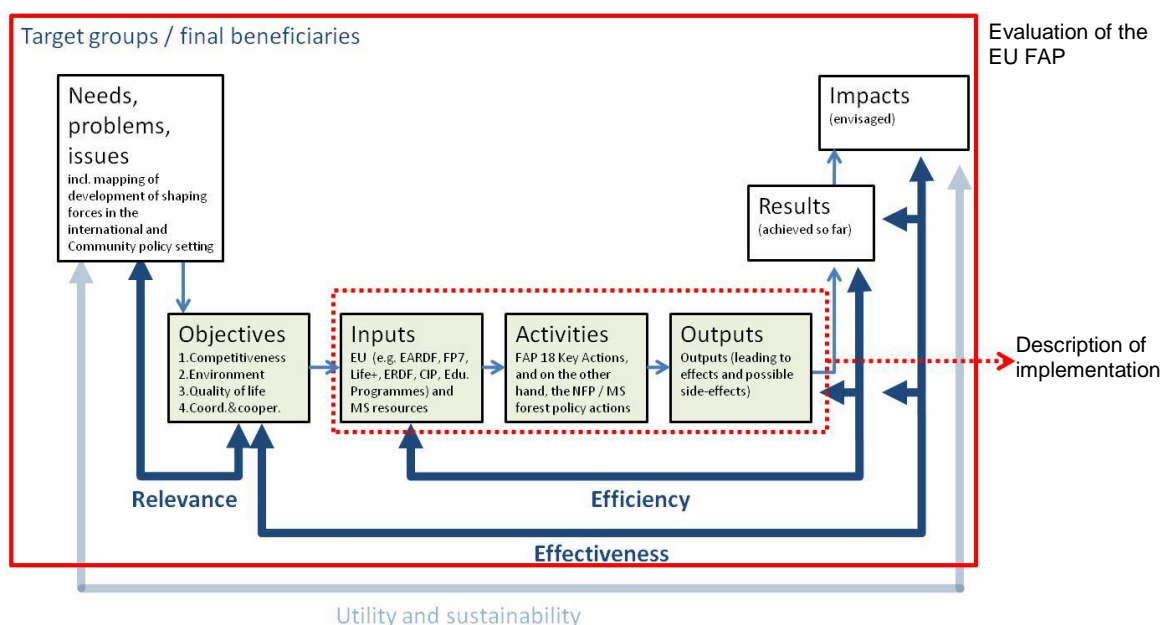
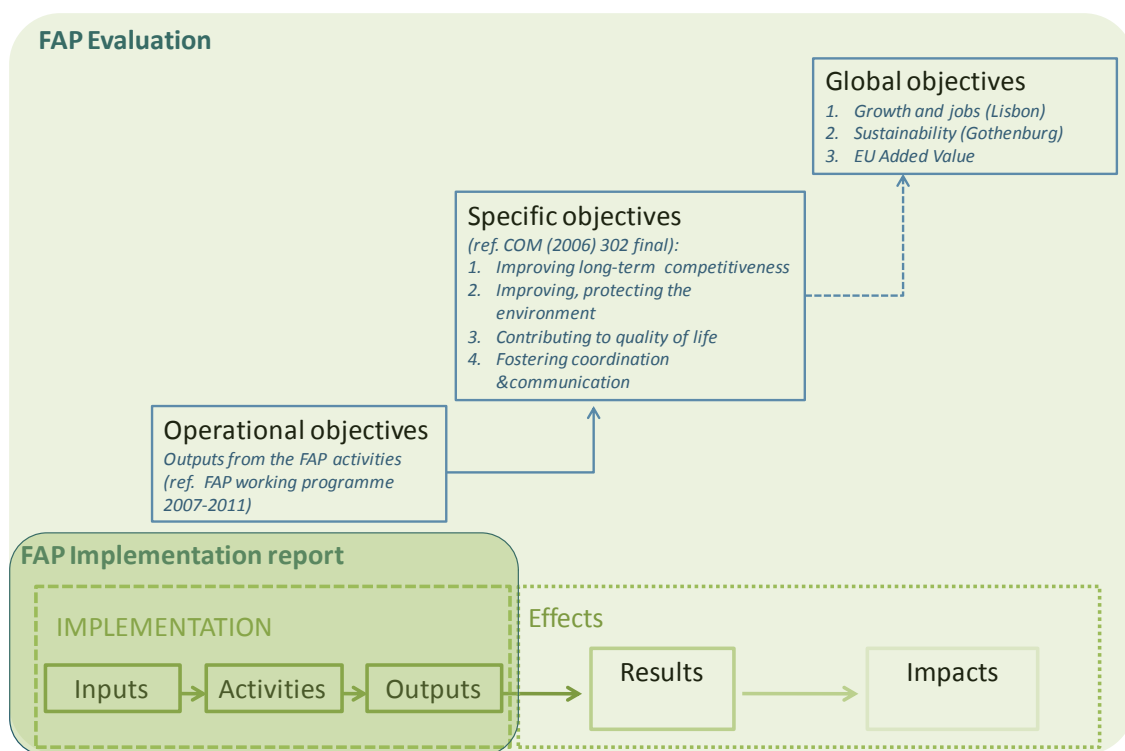


Figure 3. EU FAP mid-term evaluation: the scope of the implementation review and the evaluation.

The period of analysis is from the beginning of the implementation of the EU FAP (January 2007) up until the mid-term review and the time of data collection by the evaluation surveys (March 2009). More recent activities and developments up to June 2009 have been added when they are relevant for the description. Stakeholder involvement and activities parallel to the EU FAP are included to the extent that such references are made in the documents reviewed and in the surveys carried out for the mid-term evaluation.

### 3.2 Intervention logic model, definitions and judgement criteria

The Intervention Logic Model is used as the method of analysis. It depicts causal relationships between the Outputs of the EU FAP (including relevant connection with inputs and activities) and its expected Outcomes (results) as presented in Figure 4.



**Figure 4. The intervention logic approach for the EU FAP mid-term evaluation.**

The two key features of the framework – implementation reporting and evaluation – are closely connected. The definition of the generic framework for the intervention logic linking the intended objectives and the EU FAP actions builds on what is already in place as defined in the work programme 2007-2011 – i.e. the Key Actions, expected results, as well as the activities and the main actors to implement the Action Plan.

While the implementation review is performed to compile information on the amount and nature of activities carried out to implement the proposed actions, the evaluation is performed against the *expected outcomes and impacts* as defined in the EU FAP specific objectives and the global objectives. The Intervention Logic Model is used to

illustrate the EU FAP logical relationship between the Plan, activities and outputs and the expected results and effects as defined in the Objectives, Key Actions and activities of the EU FAP, in other words, the logic how the measures are expected to lead and contribute to the targeted objectives.

The evaluation is constructed in accordance with the 11 Evaluation Questions grouped under six Evaluation Themes assessing the *effectiveness*, *efficiency* and *relevance* of the Action Plan. Judgements are based on the above intervention logic approach.

The Evaluation Questions concerning *efficiency* and *effectiveness* are set as to what extent the activities of specific Key Action(s) of the Forest Action Plan contributing to a specific EU FAP objective have been *carried out so far effectively and efficiently*, or to what extent the activities of specific Key Action(s) of the Forest Action Plan *carried out so far have been effective and efficient* in contributing to a specific EU FAP objective. The Evaluation Question concerning *relevance* is defined as to assess the EU FAP in relation to the *needs that the Plan was meant to address*. The approach to judging effectiveness, efficiency and relevance is as follows:

- **Effectiveness** refers to the extent to which the EU FAP objectives and intended results are achieved or are expected to be achieved. Based on the inventory of activities evidence is gathered about results and effects from the activities. Evidence is collected both from the secondary sources and from the perceptions of the Leading Actors implementing the Action Plan (the Commission departments and services, and the Member States) as well as from the stakeholders directly or indirectly affected by the Action Plan.
- **Efficiency** refers to the extent to which outputs and/or the desired effects are achieved with the lowest possible use of resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, administrative costs, etc.). The Action Plan indicates existing financial instruments which can be used in implementing the activities (ref. Commission staff working document, Annex to COM(2006) 302 final, p.23). However, no financial targets are set in the action plan documentation. Information collection uses reviews on secondary sources (financing programmes) and information from the Leading Actors and the stakeholders. The perceptions of Leading Actors as well as stakeholders on good practices and/or shortcomings in the implementation are used to illustrate the assessment of efficiency.
- The question of **relevance** is approached from three angles: (1) relevance of *issues* (the EU FAP Objectives including also investigation of new emerging issues); (2) relevance of *instruments* (Key Actions and activities including also investigation of any activities missing from the Action Plan); and (3) relevance of the *organisational set-up*. These themes are approached by expert perspective of the evaluation team, by perceptions of the Leading Actors implementing the plan (the Commission and the Member States), as well as by the feedback from the stakeholders.

### ***3.3 Data and information sources***

The mid-term evaluation of the EU FAP is carried out after only two years of implementation, and this limits the analysis and assessment of impacts and realisation of the expected (or other) effects – e.g. measures from specific studies and reports to implementation require time before results from activities by expected target groups (e.g. policy and decision makers or the stakeholders) can be demonstrated. The EU FAP has no specific resources allocated for implementation and no clearly defined financial or other quantified targets, and therefore the quantitative data available for analysis is limited. Assessment needs to lean on qualitative analysis and information and assessments collected directly e.g. from the Leading Actors implementing the EU FAP. The Leading Actors are defined in the EU FAP work programme 2007-2011 i.e. they are the Commission, the Standing Forestry Committee and the Member States. The feedback from stakeholders is used to validate the information and assessment at the Community level, and at the national and sub-national levels.

The data and information collection is based on document and database reviews and information collection by surveys designed for the mid-term evaluation.

Document reviews cover the official documentation of the EU FAP and its implementation. Some of the documents are publicly available, and some are not publicly available. The Commission has delivered for the evaluation team e.g. meeting and working group materials. The evaluation team has had available the meeting documentations of the Standing Forestry Committee (June 2006 – February 2009). Advisory Group on Forestry and Cork (March 2004 – February 2009) and the Inter-services' Group on Forestry (September 2006 – February 2009). Reviews of the official documents of the European Council and the European Parliament are based on the internet-based document registers, i.e. only the publicly available materials. Also materials from relevant stakeholders, including the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions, have been reviewed. Furthermore, information on activities carried out has also been collected from the databases of the financing instruments which were indicated in the EU FAP.

Specific information collection tools (i.e. survey and interview questionnaires) were designed for three target groups: (1) representatives of the Commission; (2) Member States; and (3) stakeholders.

The Commission is a Leading Actor in the implementation of the EU FAP, and the interview questionnaire was constructed so that it goes through all EU FAP activities in detail. The level of detail was approached in all interviews, but in practice, the interviews concentrated on questions about the themes and specific Key Actions that the interviewee's work relates to. Consequently the information collected presents descriptions of the implementation and self-assessment of the progress made as well as assessment of the involvement of other Leading Actors (i.e. other Commission departments and the Member States) and stakeholders in the specific EU FAP objectives or Key Actions.

In total 14 Commission departments and services were contacted for the assessment, and interview/questionnaire responses were received from DG AGRI, DG ENV, DG ENTR, DG ESTAT, DG RTD, DG EMPL, DG TREN, DG TRADE, DG SANCO, JRC, DG DEV and DG REGIO. The response from Commission Directorates General shows that many of the DGs are actively involved in the implementation of the EU FAP, which is certainly also due to the EU FAP itself. Though information and perceptions were collected from several departments, the evaluation report does not distinguish which department has been active in which Key Action or given which assessment.

The Member State survey consisted of two parts: (1) a detailed inventory of the EU FAP Key Actions and activities where the Member States are indicated as Leading Actors in the EU FAP work programme; and (2) assessment questions on effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the EU FAP, including the relationship of the national forest programme and national forest policy to the EU FAP. The survey questionnaire was distributed through the contact persons for the Member State representatives in the Standing Forestry Committee.

All 27 Member States were contacted for the survey, and a response was received from 24 Member States (AT, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, PL, RO, SE, SI, SK and UK) – responses were not received from Portugal, Malta and Belgium. Together with the status of implementation, the Member States were also requested to specify the most important measures in their country contributing to achievement of the EU FAP objectives. The level of detail in the Member States' responses varies considerably. A number of respondents pointed out that it is difficult to indicate activities at the national level that were implemented specifically due to the EU FAP. Rather, the activities were ongoing – in many cases, for several years already – and they would have taken place also without the Action Plan, even though they now contribute to the objectives defined in the EU FAP. As a consequence, the resulting list of activities in the Member States is not exhaustive, but rather gives a sample of activities and types of activities carried out within the objectives of the EU FAP. Member State assessments of the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the EU FAP provide feedback to the Community level implementation i.e. implementation by the Commission as a Leading Actor, implementation by the Member States as Leading Actors, and involvement of the stakeholders in the EU FAP as a whole.

The stakeholder questionnaire was more general than the questionnaires for the representatives of the Commission and Member States. The questionnaire included assessment questions on effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the EU FAP. Over 70 stakeholder organisations were contacted, mainly based on the list of contacts of the Advisory Group on Forestry and Cork. A total of 31 responses were received. These stakeholder responses represent: producers (16); traders, operators, industry and workers (8); environmental organisations (2); and other stakeholders (5). Other stakeholders include mainly research and technology related organisations, e.g. COST and FTP, and various interests, e.g. the European Economic and Social Committee EESC. As defined by the respondents themselves, the stakeholder responses reflect both the level of European federations (8 responses from representatives of Brussels-based offices and 14 responses from representatives of other regional/international federations) and the level of national federations/associations (9 responses).



To allow comparison of the assessments by the three target groups, parts of the questionnaires were identical for all three groups.

All responses were invited as an expert assessment, thus no official statements were requested from the organisations. This affects the quality of information, and consequently the nature of conclusions that can be drawn from the assessments. The assessments cannot be directly generalised to cover the organisation or e.g. the group which the individual respondent represents. The level of detail and explanation of the views given vary considerably in the written questionnaire responses. This needs to be taken into account when reading the analysis for the evaluation questions.

In order to improve the traceability of how the judgements are concluded and to show evidence for the statements made, Chapter 5 indicates the number of responses, on which statements made in the analysis are based. Summing-up the assessments for the analysis in this way requires generalisation of the responses. The self-assessments of the Leading Actors are included in the judgements, and feedback from other actors and the stakeholders is given in order to show whether the statements given can be verified. Conclusions made in the analysis are based on the evaluators' external view and expert opinion, unless specifically otherwise indicated.

## 4 Implementation of the EU FAP

This chapter presents the implementation of each of the EU FAP Key Actions. The description summarises the responses to the evaluation questionnaire of the 24 Member States. At the end of each EU FAP Objective there is a summary graph of the implementation status in the Member States according to the survey information provided by the Member States; a more detailed presentation of the inventory results is available in Annex 1.

### ***OBJECTIVE 1: Improving long-term competitiveness***

| <b>Key Action 1 Examine the effects of globalisation on the economic viability and competitiveness of EU forestry</b> |  |                      |                  |
|---|--|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>   |  | <b>Leading actor</b> | <b>Timeframe</b> |
| 1.1   | Study on the effects of globalisation on the economic viability of EU forestry | COM                  | 2007-2008        |
| 1.2   | Conference on strengthening competitiveness of forestry                        | German Presidency    | 2007             |

The target of the Key Action 1 is to understand and raise awareness of factors affecting competitiveness of forestry in the EU. A study on the effects of globalisation on the economic viability of EU forestry (activity 1.1) was commissioned by the Commission in 2006. The study was finalised in December 2007, and its results were presented to the SFC, and disseminated among the Commission services and key stakeholders, for example, in the AGFC. The study is available at the Commission forestry web site<sup>40</sup>.

The conference on strengthening the competitiveness of the forest-based sector (activity 1.2) was held in Munich, June 2007, in the context of the German Presidency together with the German federal state of Bavaria. The preliminary results of the globalisation study were presented and discussed at the conference. The conference recommendations were presented to the SFC in December 2007 together with the globalisation study mentioned above.

Many Member States report on activities for raising awareness of factors affecting competitiveness of forestry in the EU. Examples of activities relating to the Key Action 1 are e.g. conducting and communicating research results to stakeholders (FI, IR, SK), addressing economic viability of the forest sector in the national forest programmes NFPs (CZ, FI), making a plan for competitiveness of sawmills 2007-2009 (FR), and a national Charta für Holz / Charter for Wood (DE). Furthermore, Germany is preparing in 2009 an initiative towards an EU charter for wood as recommended in the EU Conference 2007 in Munich.

Stakeholders have been involved in Key Action 1 mainly through the AGFC.

<sup>40</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/publi/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/publi/index_en.htm)

| <b>Key Action 2 Encourage research and technological development to enhance the competitiveness of the forest sector</b> |  |                      |                  |
|--|--|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>  |  | <b>Leading actor</b> | <b>Timeframe</b> |
| 2.1  | Support forest-based sector research and technological development                                   | COM                  | 2007-2011        |
| 2.2  | Exploring the possibilities of better coordination and communication on forest-based sector research | COM, SFC             | 2007-2008        |
| 2.3  | Forest-based Sector Technology Platform Strategic Research Agenda (FTP SRA)                          | Presidencies         | 2007             |

The target of the Key Action 2 is to develop the forest sector, with a strong emphasis on research and development (R&D). Forest sector related R&D (activity 2.1) has been supported with a regular exchange of information. The seventh Framework Programme (FP7) is the main financing tool in the EU to support research and development activities in 2007-2013. During 2007-2008 the SFC has been regularly informed by the Commission on the FP7 calls and projects. The SFC formulated its opinion on the FP7 calls in 2008, and indicated that the opinion should not only serve in support of the Forest-based sector Technology Platform Strategic Research Agenda (FTP SRA), but should be used in the context of the research agendas of the Member States. The FP7 calls make reference to the EU FAP, and the EU FAP topics are well represented in the calls 2007-2009 (two or three calls per year).

The conference on Forest Governance and the Role of Forestry Research (activity 2.2) was arranged during the Slovenian presidency in 2008. Conference recommendations were reported to the SFC and AGFC.

The Forest-based sector Technology Platform (FTP) is one of the technology platforms bringing together technological know-how, industry, administration, and financial institutions to support the European Research and Innovation Area. The FTP Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) was adopted in 2006. In 2009 a total of 17 National Research Agendas (NRA) had been developed and adopted by national support groups (incl. 15 EU Member States i.e. AT, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LV, SE, SI and UK). Further, a regional strategic research agenda for the Mediterranean region has been formulated. The EU FAP has supported the FTP (activity 2.3) e.g. through the FP7 and the above mentioned conference on governance. Member States report on several activities related to the FTP, e.g. formation of national support groups and NRAs. Also additional activities are reported for strengthening the forest sector research at national level e.g. reorganisation of a research institute (HU), establishment of centres of excellence (SK), or specific research initiatives (IE).

The FTP is a generic stakeholder activity, where the EU FAP has only a supporting role. During 2007-2009 the FTP conferences have been linked with the EU presidencies (AT and FI in 2006, DE in 2007, SI 2008 and SE in 2009) – e.g. the conference “Development of the forest-based sector in Eastern Europe” was organised by the FTP in Slovenia in 2008, back-to-back with the conference on Forest Governance and the Role of Forestry Research (activity 2.2).

Stakeholders have been regularly involved in the Key Action 2 through the AGFC.

| <b>Key Action 3 Exchange and assess experiences on the valuation and marketing of non-wood forest goods and services</b> |  |                      |                  |
|--|--|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>  |  | <b>Leading actor</b> | <b>Timeframe</b> |
| 3.1  | Carry out studies and pilot projects on valuation, compensation and innovative marketing of non-wood forest goods and services, including methodologies              | COM, MS              | 2007-2011        |
| 3.2  | Examining ongoing activities and lessons learned on compensation for and valuation of non-wood forest goods and services, and identification of possible constraints | SFC, COM             | 2007-2008        |

The target of the Key Action 3 is to exchange and assess experiences on the valuation and marketing of non-wood forest goods and services. For the purpose of examining ongoing activities (activity 3.2) a SFC ad hoc Working Group on Valuation and Compensation Methods of Non-Wood Forest Goods and Services was established in 2007. The Working Group concluded its work at the end of 2008 with a report. The Working Group consisted of 20 participants (14 Member State representatives and six stakeholder representatives). The “Study on the Development and Marketing of Non-Market Forest Products and Services – FORVALUE” (activity 3.1) was carried out parallel to the Working Group. Proceeding of the study was presented regularly in the meetings of the Working Group as well as in the SFC in 2008. The study report was finalised in November 2008, and it is available in the DG AGRI External Studies web site<sup>41</sup>. The study and the Working Group provided state-of-the-art information for discussion in the SFC. On the basis of the Working Group results and a draft opinion elaborated by the Commission, the SFC adopted the SFC opinion on valuation of and compensation for non-wood forest goods and services in the beginning of 2009.

Also other studies commissioned by the Commission contributed to the topic, including a study on the “Economic value of groundwater and biodiversity in European forests” presented to SFC in 2009.

Research on the subject was supported with a call for projects in the FP7: “Developing new methods for valuing and marketing currently non-marketable forest functions, goods and services” (FP7-KBBE-2009-3).

Member States report several activities in relation to the Key Action 3, such are national studies and pilot projects incl. models and methods for valuation (e.g. AT, CY, HU, SP), a national research programme (FI), as well as guidelines (FR, IE), information materials and advisory services (DE, IE).

Stakeholders have participated in the SFC ad hoc Working Group and they have been regularly involved in the Key Action 3 through the AGFC.

<sup>41</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/external/>

| <b>Key Action 4 Promote the use of forest biomass for energy generation</b> |  |                      |                  |
|---|--|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>   |  | <b>Leading actor</b> | <b>Timeframe</b> |
| 4.1   | Improve the mobilisation and efficient use of wood and wood residues, including low-value timber   | SFC, COM             | 2007-2008        |
| 4.2   | Developing cooperation methods and mechanisms between forest owners in energy markets  | COM                  | 2007             |
| 4.3   | Support research and development of technologies for the production of heat, cooling, electricity and fuels from forest resources, and encourage the implementation of Strategic Research Agendas of the Forest-based Sector Technology Platform and the Biofuel Technology Platform | COM                  | 2007-2011        |
| 4.4   | Analyse how implementation of Key Action 4 is supported by rural development programmes in individual MS   | COM, SFC             | 2011             |

The target of the Key Action 4 is to mitigate climate change by substituting fossil fuels, improving energy self-sufficiency, enhancing security of energy supply and providing job opportunities in rural areas. At the beginning of 2007, a SFC ad hoc Working Group on Mobilisation and Efficient Use of Wood and Wood Residues for Energy Generation (activity 4.1) was started. The Working Group delivered a report at the end of 2008, and based on the work, the SFC opinion was formulated in early 2009. The issue of wood mobilisation is further tackled by a study commissioned by the Commission on “Prospects for market supply from fragmented forest structures” (ref. EU FAP activity 5.2).

A parallel activity to the Key Action 4 took place in 2005-2007 through the Advisory Committee on Community Policy regarding Forestry and Forest-based Industries working group “Effects of renewables on the forest sector”.

There are several studies commissioned by the Commission linked with the Key Action 4, e.g. studies on “Sustainability Criteria & Certification Systems for Biomass Production” (February 2008) and “Real potential for changes in growth and use of EU forests” (2009), as well as studies on environmentally friendly technologies and use of renewable energy. The JRC published a report on EU Forest-based biomass for energy: cost/supply relations and constraints, linked with an Expert Consultation arranged in September 2007 in Joensuu, Finland. Furthermore, the JRC has produced a high-spatial resolution forest map covering all EU Member States.

A parallel activity to the Key Action 4 is the MCPFE “Working Group on sustainability criteria for forest biomass production, including bioenergy” – the working group finalised its work at its third meeting in June 2009. The Commission follows up this activity and reports regularly to the ISG and the SFC.

Member States have also been active regarding the topics of wood mobilisation and bioenergy – e.g. the following activities were indicated by the Member States: inclusion of the theme in the NFPs (CZ, EE), National Biomass Action Plans (CZ, LV, RO, SK), conferences and promotion measures (IE), studies (AT, LV), bioenergy research programmes (FI), and demonstration programmes (IE).

With regard to the development of cooperation methods and mechanisms between forest owners in energy markets (activity 4.2), the Commission initiated a pilot study on a

demonstration/communication action. The action involved several stakeholders and four countries and concluded in a conference in 2007. Member States indicate that development of cooperation methods is something that already happens or is in progress. Examples of activities reported by the Member States are initiatives from the sector (i.e. by forest cooperatives or forest municipalities) in order to structure local wood-energy supply chains (FR) and projects by forest owner associations aiming to increase wood mobilisation through education, advice and demonstration activities (SE).

Research and development in the field of renewables (activity 4.3) is an important topic at the moment in different financing programmes (FP7, Interreg, CIP-IEE and also national research programmes in several Member States), as well as through the activities of the Forest-based sector Technology Platform and the Biofuels Technology Platform.

Analysing how the implementation of Key Action 4 is supported by rural development programmes in individual Member States (activity 4.4) is scheduled for 2011. The Commission report on the implementation of Forestry Measures under the Rural Development Regulation 1698/2005 for the period 2007-2013 gives already indication that several Member States will utilise the rural development programmes to support activities relating to the Key Action 4.

Stakeholders have been active e.g. through AGFC and the SFC ad hoc Working Group. There are several studies and other activities on wood mobilisation by stakeholder organisations, e.g. the study and the summary report by the Confederation of the European Paper Industries CEPI and the UNECE/FAO Timber section on the “Potential Sustainable Wood Supply in Europe” (October 2008), the draft Wood Mobilisation Action Plan by the Confederation of European Forest Owners CEPF, and the European Forest Producer Organisations’ joint declaration on wood mobilisation (2008). Furthermore several workshops and seminars have been arranged on wood mobilisation as joint efforts between several organisations (January 2007 in Geneva and June 2009 in Grenoble). The Bureau of Nordic Family Forests has formed a working group on wood mobilisation and bioenergy. The activities show the importance of the theme. The EU FAP has on its part raised the importance of the theme, but not directly initiated these stakeholder activities.

| <b>Key Action 5 Foster the cooperation between forest owners and enhance education and training in forestry</b> |  |                      |                  |
|---|--|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>   |  | <b>Leading actor</b> | <b>Timeframe</b> |
| 5.1   | To survey MS activities on support for: a) vocational training and education of forest owners and forest workers; b) development of advisory services for forest owners and their associations, and; c) environmental awareness of forest owners and workers | SFC, COM             | 2008             |
| 5.2   | Study on the market supply of wood and other forest products, in particular on obstacles to mobilisation due to fragmented ownership structures  | COM                  | 2009             |
| 5.3   | Exchange of experiences on cooperation methods of private forest owner's organisations   | SFC, COM             | 2009             |

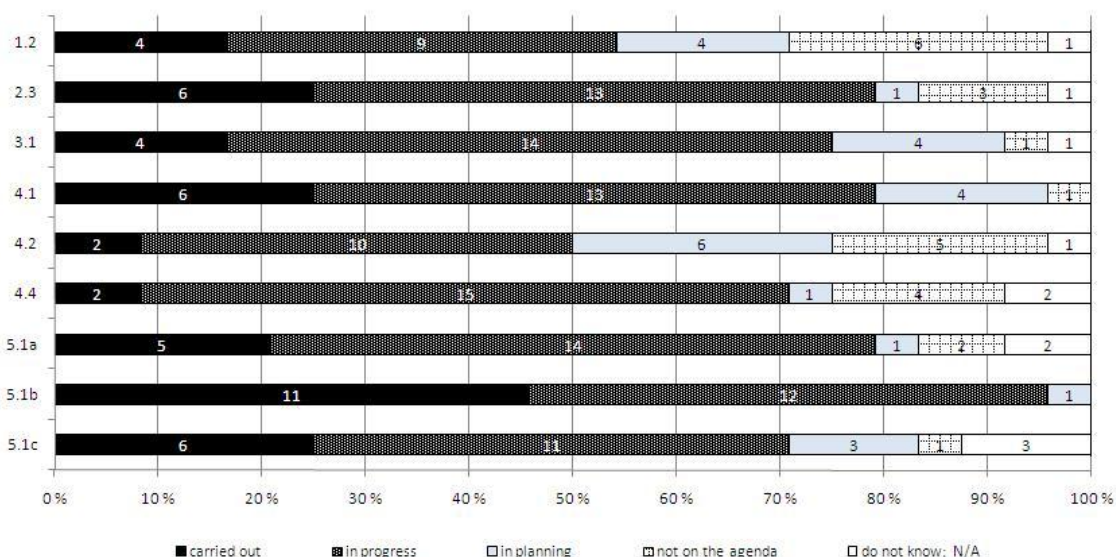
The target of the Key Action 5 is to foster the cooperation between forest owners and enhance education and training in forestry. The study “Prospects for market supply from fragmented forest structures” (activity 5.2) has been commissioned by the Commission and the report is expected in 2010.



The Confederation of European Forest Owners CEPF has compiled a report on “European Forest Owner Organisations – Forest Owner Cooperation: Main figures, aims and goals” (2008). The report was presented at the SFC meeting in May 2009 (activity 5.3).

The Commission’s “Report on Implementation of Forestry Measures under the Rural Development Regulation 1698/2005” for the period 2007-2013 includes information on vocational education and advisory services supported by the rural development programmes. Member States indicate activities in relation to forest owners and workers, most of them ongoing on a regular basis and with no specific reference to EU FAP as a triggering element.

Stakeholders have been involved through the AGFC and participation in the SFC ad hoc Working Group (wood mobilisation) and in the study on fragmentation of forest ownership.



**Figure 5. EU FAP Objective 1 implementation status in the Member States.**  
Activities where the Member States are indicated in the EU FAP Work programme 2007-2011 as Actors – on their own or together with the Commission. Activity numbers refer to the Key Actions (see text boxes above). N=24, no information from Portugal, Belgium and Malta.

The Member State responses to the mid-term evaluation survey indicate that the EU FAP Objective 1 activities are to a large extent ongoing and reflected in the national agendas (see Figure 5). Raising awareness of factors affecting the competitiveness of forestry in the EU (activity 1.2), and developing cooperation methods and mechanisms between forest owners in energy markets (activity 4.2) are not so high on the agenda across the EU Member States (about 50% of respondents indicate activities carried out or ongoing).

As indicated in the above Key Action descriptions, Figure 5 does not present specific activities triggered by the EU FAP. Many activities are – and have been – ongoing in the Member States even though they now contribute to the objectives and specific Key

Actions defined in the EU FAP, and even though the EU FAP now provides support for carrying out and continuing the activities. However, several countries do report that emphasis given e.g. to the bioenergy themes in the EU FAP implementation in 2007-2008 has also affected raising these themes in the national agendas and national discussions (see section 2.2.4).

**OBJECTIVE 2: Improving and protecting the environment**

| <b>Key Action 6 Facilitate EU compliance with the obligations on climate change mitigation of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol and encourage adaptation to the effects of climate change</b> |   |                      |                  |
|---|---|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>   |   | <b>Leading actor</b> | <b>Timeframe</b> |
| 6.1   | Examine how to respond in a more coordinated way to the obligations of Articles 3.3 and 3.4 of the Kyoto Protocol   | COM, SFC             | 2008-2010        |
| 6.2   | Increase the effectiveness of the discussions on climate change mitigation and adaptation by facilitating exchanges between the SFC and the EU sinks experts group  | COM, SFC             | 2007-2011        |
| 6.3   | Carry out a study and other relevant scientific projects on impacts of climate change on forestry and on adaptation of forestry to climate change   | COM                  | 2007-2009        |
| 6.4   | MS reporting on their activities to: a) raise awareness on the impacts of climate change on forestry; b) address the impacts of climate change on forestry; c) promote climate change mitigation and adaptation | MS, COM              | 2009-2011        |

The target of the Key Action 6 is to facilitate EU compliance with the obligations on climate change mitigation of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol, and encourage adaptation to the effects of climate change. In 2007-2009 several actions were taken in addressing the issues of climate change mitigation and adaptation both at the level of the EU and in the Member States. The Commission briefed to the SFC (activity 6.1) on the forest-related developments in the UNFCCC SBSTA meeting (in Bonn, May 2007), and about the progress in negotiations on the post-2012 regime (UNFCCC COP13 Bali Action Plan and the outcomes of COP14 in Poznan in 2008). Reporting of forest carbon stocks is an integral part of Kyoto requirements, and the forest monitoring activities are discussed under Key Action 8.

The Commission study on “Impacts of Climate Change on European Forests, and Options for Adaptation” (activity 6.3) was completed in 2008. The study report is accessible from the Commission forestry website.

Exchange of information on the activities of Member States (activity 6.4) is starting in the SFC ad hoc Working Group on Climate Change and Forestry in 2009. The results are expected in 2010. In the mid-term evaluation survey, Member States reported a variety of activities e.g. information campaigns and activities, dissemination of information targeted at a range of interest groups (DK, EE, EL, SE), studies (CY, FR, LT) and participation in research projects at both national and EU levels, an adaptation strategy and action plan (SI), integration of mitigation and adaptation issues into national forest programmes (CZ, FI, SK), and afforestation measures with the rural development programme resources (RO, HU). The responses indicate that the level of activity differs considerably between the countries: in general, the Nordic countries as well as some Western European countries are very active.



Stakeholders were active in raising the theme of climate change to the agenda of the EU FAP. The AGFC proposed for the SFC an ad hoc Working Group on Climate Change and Forestry in 2007. The theme has also been reflected in position papers and deliberations of several stakeholders.

| <b>Key Action 7 Contribute towards achieving the revised Community biodiversity objectives for 2010 and beyond</b> |   |                      |                  |
|--|---|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>  |   | <b>Leading actor</b> | <b>Timeframe</b> |
| 7.1  | Exchange experiences on implementation of Natura 2000 in forest areas   | SFC, COM             | 2008-2009        |
| 7.2  | Consider forest biodiversity reporting and monitoring in the framework of the SEBI system of EU biodiversity indicators   | COM, SFC             | 2007-2009        |
| 7.3  | Consider monitoring of the fragmentation of forests and of the effects of forest expansion on biodiversity  | COM, SFC             | 2008-2010        |
| 7.4  | Follow developments in CBD and other international fora regarding forest biodiversity   | SFC, COM             | 2007-2011        |
| 7.5  | Periodically organise joint meetings of the EU Forest and Nature Directors and promote active participation by forest administrations in informal exchanges between MS on implementation of nature protection legislation in the EU | COM                  | 2007-2011        |

The target of the Key Action 7 is to work towards achieving the revised Community biodiversity objectives of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and beyond. Exchange of experience on implementation of Natura 2000 in forest areas (activity 7.1) took place in the SFC in 2008, and as a follow-up a draft synthesis report based on written contributions provided by the Member States was presented to the SFC in 2009. In the EU FAP mid-term evaluation questionnaire the Member States report, for example, the following activities: national and international projects (EE, SK), dialogue between forest owners and public administration (SE), guidance to forest owners (LU), and seminars, meetings and workshops (FR, IT).

The state of advancement of Member States and Commission reports according to Article 17 of the Habitats Directive (activity 7.2) was presented in the SFC in 2008. The presentation provided an overview of the present state of conservation of species and habitats listed in the annexes of the directive, with a focus on forest species and forest habitats. Furthermore, the Streamlined European Biodiversity Indicators SEBI 2010 indicator framework was presented in the SFC in 2008. The JRC has developed a methodology for the analysis of forest spatial patterns. The methodology was included in the MCPFE 2007 report and it was presented as a component of the SEBI indicators covering: (a) the analysis of forest spatial patterns and their relation to forest vulnerability and resilience, (b) use of national forest inventories for the analysis of forest spatial diversity, and (c) implementation of the biodiversity project in the Biosoil pilot study funded under the Forest Focus Regulation (EC) 2152/2003.

A parallel study has been carried out by the European Environment Agency (EEA) with the report on “European forests – ecosystem conditions and sustainable use” in 2008.

Forest area changes and forest fragmentation in the EU (activity 7.3) were reported by JRC based on high resolution forest/non-forest maps. The report covers the Member States and cooperating countries of the EEA. A study “Undisturbed forests in Europe: concept, assessment and guidelines” was launched in 2008 by the Commission and results are foreseen in 2009.

The SFC was regularly debriefed after the CBD meetings by the Commission representatives (activity 7.4).

The GreenForce network (activity 7.5) is the EU network of Member State practitioners in both nature conservation and forestry. It is an informal and voluntary network facilitating communication and sharing experience on practical implementation, compliance and enforcement of nature conservation and forestry laws within the Member States. GreenForce held two expert meetings and one plenary meeting in 2007 and two expert meetings in 2008.

The EU Nature Directors have regular meetings and in one of them (in Slovenia, January 2008) discussions concerned climate change and forestry. Member States report active participation in the EU Forest Directors and Nature Directors meetings. Also stakeholders have been invited to participate in the EU nature directors and forest directors meetings, depending on the Presidency.

In addition to direct implementation of EU FAP, the Member States report several additional activities contributing to the Key Action 7, mainly studies and research programmes (BG, IE, LV, SI, SK) and national policy programmes (FI, NL).

| <b>Key Action 8 Work towards a European Forest Monitoring System</b> |   |                      |                  |
|--|---|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>  |   | <b>Leading actor</b> | <b>Timeframe</b> |
| 8.1  | Further elaborating a European Forest Monitoring System | MS, COM              | 2007-2011        |
| 8.2  | Establishing a European Forest Data Centre              | COM                  | 2007-2011        |

The target of the Key Action 8 is to work towards a European Forest Monitoring System (EFMS) with close involvement of the Member States and a Forest Data Centre within JRC.

The Forest Focus Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 2152/2003) which expired in 2006 funded a Community scheme for broad-based, harmonised and comprehensive, long-term monitoring of forest condition in Europe. The Commission's report to the Council and the European Parliament on the implementation of the Forest Focus scheme was given in 2008 (COM(2008)6). In several meetings in 2007 (activity 8.1), experts of the Member States provided a basic outline for future European forest monitoring. The JRC supported the development with recommendations for reliable and cost effective monitoring. Possible financing sources were discussed and the Life+ programme was investigated for further elaboration of the monitoring system. The first call for Life+ proposals was in October 2007, and as a result a forest monitoring project FutMon (Further Development and Implementation of an EU-level Forest Monitoring System, 2009-2010) was launched in January 2009. Altogether 24 Member States are participating in the FutMon Project.

The Commission White Paper on "Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action" was published in April 2009 (COM(2009)147), and it is expected to start the EU discussion relating to forest protection and monitoring. The topic of forest monitoring is also kept in focus during the Swedish EU presidency with the Conference on future forest monitoring in the European Union in November 2009.

The JRC is responsible for the development of the European Forest Data Centre (EFDAC) and the European Soil Data Centre as an integral part of the Shared Environmental Information System SEIS. JRC has set up a first prototype of EFDAC<sup>42</sup> in 2008 (activity 8.2) and it has been presented to SFC. The current “EFDAC viewer” includes data on forest fire (from the EFFIS), forest extent, forest fragmentation and forest defoliation (from the Forest Focus Data Platform). Many Member States provided National Forest Inventory data, and other available European data, such as from MCPFE, are also linked to the system.

The EFDAC is the central access point for forest information at European level in support of relevant EU policies, and as the basis of the EFMS. The implementation of EFDAC contributes to enhancing data harmonisation and streamlining data collection, which will improve the reporting to e.g. MCPFE Criteria & Indicators or FAO Forest Resource Assessments. EFDAC builds on information systems currently existing or under development. EFDAC complies with the guidelines of the Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe (INSPIRE). Furthermore, the work on the production of spatial information on forest resources (forest mapping) and forest damage assessment contribute to the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) initiative.

| <b>Key Action 9 Enhance the protection of EU forests</b> |   |                      |                  |
|--|---|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>  |   | <b>Leading actor</b> | <b>Timeframe</b> |
| 9.1  | Further develop the European Forest Fire Information System   | COM, MS              | 2007-2011        |
| 9.2  | Carry out a study analysing main factors influencing the evolution of forest condition in Europe (including forest fires), the efficiency of current Community instruments and measures for forest protection | COM                  | 2007-2011        |
| 9.3  | Form groupings of MS to study particular regional problems with the condition of forests  | MS                   | 2007-2010        |
| 9.4  | Support research on protection of forests and phytosanitary issues  | MS, COM              | 2007, 2009       |

The target of the Key action 9 is to enhance protection of EU forests by, for example, improving the European Forest Fire Information System, supporting exchange of experience between Member States, as well as supporting coordination and launching of studies and research projects.

The European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS)<sup>43</sup> was developed by JRC in cooperation with DG ENV and became operational in 2000. The EFFIS is an information system providing data on active fires, perimeter of burned areas and analysis of fire damage; it is updated daily. Further development of EFFIS (activity 9.1) has taken place e.g. by four tenders launched by JRC in 2008/2009 for the operational EFFIS modules in the areas of: (1) forest fire fuel mapping; (2) forest fire emissions and dispersion; (3) socio-economic impact of fires; (4) harmonisation of terminology of fire causes and establishment of a European nomenclature system. Member States are involved in the development of EFFIS, providing the JRC with annual data on forest fires (individual country reports), and participating in the Expert Group on Forest Fire, a panel for EFFIS. The EFFIS currently covers 26 EU and neighbour countries and its extension is on-going to include other non-EU Mediterranean countries in collaboration with the FAO Silva-Mediterranea Network. In 2008 new modules of impact of fires on

<sup>42</sup> <http://efdac.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

<sup>43</sup> <http://effis.jrc.it>

soil erosion and estimation of emissions were implemented. Development of EFFIS is an ongoing process and will continue beyond the EU FAP.

A study on “Means of combating forest dieback in the European Union” (activity 9.2) was conducted and finalised in 2007, and the report is available from the Commission web page<sup>44</sup>. It was succeeded with other studies. The Commission study “How to protect forests against harmful impacts” was launched in 2008, and the report is expected in September 2009. SFC has been briefed on the studies and e.g. the preparation of the Commission Communications Reinforcing the EU’s disaster response capacity (COM(2008)130) and Community strategy for the prevention of natural and man-made disasters (including forest fires) (COM(2009)82). In addition, the Commission White Paper on Adapting to climate change (COM(2009)147) is discussed in the SFC in 2009; the debate to be started based on the White Paper relates directly also to Key Actions 6, 7 and 8 i.e. both future forest protection and monitoring.

Support of groupings of Member States for studying particular regional problems of forest condition (activity 9.3) has mainly taken place in the forest fire expert group. The expert group of the Member States’ representatives was established already in 1998 by the Commission. The group meets twice a year. It gives advice on the development of methods for fire assessment. During the French presidency (2008) the forest fire issue was raised in the Forest Directors meeting calling for a more active approach at the EU level. Forest fire expert group meetings are reported to the SFC.

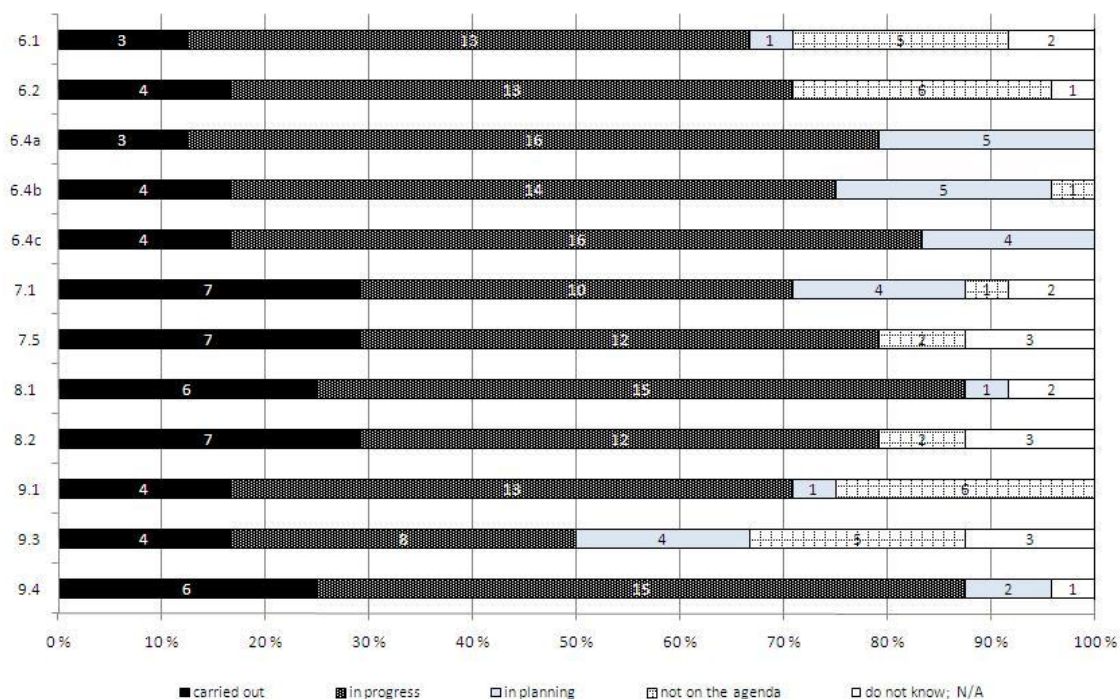
In the mid-term evaluation survey, the Member States report also many projects supposed to be launched and financed by LIFE+ and EAFRD on, for example, afforestation, forest fire and environmental issues. Also a few examples of groupings on particular regional problems are indicated: the Polish-Czech-Slovak expert group on forest protection (SK), the Baltic-Nordic Forest Statistic group (LT) and networks financed by the Nordic Minister Council in order to address regional problems concerning the condition of forests (DK).

Research on the protection of forest and phytosanitary issues (activity 9.4) is financed from the FP7. Two FP7 projects were launched in 2008: Novel forest tree breeding (Novel Tree) and Development of more efficient risk analysis techniques for pests and pathogens of phytosanitary concern (PRATIQUÉ). Furthermore a project on assessing and reducing vulnerability of European forests to climate change and the consequences for industrial and societal needs (SICA) was launched in 2009. SFC has been informed about the calls for projects and results of the calls. Parallel to these research projects, also projects financed in FP6, such as the Fire Paradox Project, contribute to the Key Action 9.

The Member States report national research activities (DK, EE, FI, RO, SE, SK) – e.g. in Finland the Finnish Forest Research Institute’s research programme “Safeguarding forest biodiversity – policy instruments and socioeconomic impacts 2005-2010” provides information on the interrelations between safeguarding of forest biodiversity and different sectors and actors in society in order to support forest and conservation policy-making.

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<sup>44</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/home\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/home_en.htm)



**Figure 6. EU FAP Objective 2 implementation status in the Member States.** Activities where the Member States are indicated in the EU FAP Work programme 2007-2011 as Actors – on their own or together with the Commission. Activity numbers refer to the Key Actions (see text boxes above). N=24, no information from Portugal, Belgium and Malta.

The Member State responses to the mid-term evaluation survey (Figure 6) shows that the EU FAP Objective 2 activities are to a large extent ongoing and reflected in the national agendas. Forming of groupings of countries to study particular regional problems (activity 9.3) is to some extent not so high in the agenda across the EU (about 50% of respondents indicate activities carried out or ongoing). As indicated in the above Key Action descriptions, this figure does not present specific activities triggered by the EU FAP (direct effect). Many activities are – and have been – ongoing in the Member States. However, a number of countries report that sharing experience between the Member States on Natura2000 in forest areas has been beneficial (see section 2.2.4).

**OBJECTIVE 3: Contributing to quality of life**

| Key Action 10 Encourage environmental education and information |   |               |           |
|---|---|---------------|-----------|
| Activity  |   | Leading actor | Timeframe |
| 10.1  | Exchange experience between MS on environmental education and information campaigns | SFC, COM      | 2008      |
| 10.2  | Review activities of MS in promoting education on sustainable forest management     | SFC, COM      | 2010      |

The target of the Key Action 10 is to raise awareness in society about sustainable forest management and to allow society to better appreciate the contribution of sustainable forest management to the quality of life through the exchange of experiences among Member States.

Exchange of experience between Member States on environmental education and information campaigns (activity 10.1) builds in particular on the work of UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists “Forest Communicators’ Network” (FCN) and its objectives to exchange views within SFC and AGFC. Austria invited other Member States to designate representatives for the implementation of the environmental education and information Key Action. The kickoff meeting was held in Vienna in February 2007 and the second meeting took place in Vienna in January 2008. Both meetings stressed the cooperation between the Member States and the FCN.

According to the Member State responses to the mid-term evaluation survey, all 24 responding countries conduct information and education campaigns. Three main target groups for the campaigns are reported: (1) schools, (2) forest owners, and (3) public in general. Examples of activities are information centres on nature or forests (EE, LU, CY, SK); an open-air museum (SK); educational paths (SK, SI); special training for forest pedagogues (AT); forest weeks or forest days (DK, EE, EL, HU, SK, SI, LT); special educational programmes in schools and/or to the youth (BG, DE, DK, FR, NL, SE, RO); and newsletters and magazines (LT, LV, IT). These activities are ongoing at the national and sub-national levels, some of them already for several years or even decades. As such they are not all triggered directly by the EU FAP, but they show the diversity of activities ongoing across the EU. Some countries emphasise the importance of the education and information measures included in their NFPs (CZ, FI).

| <b>Key Action 11 Maintain and enhance the protective functions of forests</b> |   |                      |                  |
|---|---|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>   |   | <b>Leading actor</b> | <b>Timeframe</b> |
| 11.1  | Exchange experiences on measures taken to enhance the protective function of forests  | SFC, COM             | 2009             |
| 11.2  | Carry out studies on: Flood prevention; Combating desertification; Avalanche control; Soil erosion prevention and control; Water resources preservation | COM                  | 2009-2011        |
| 11.3  | Natural hazard prevention   | COM, MS              | 2010 / 2011      |

The target of the Key Action 11 is to enhance the protective function of forests through the exchange of experiences on measures and strategies. Activities are planned for 2009-2011. The annual programme for 2009 includes exchange of experience between the Member States on measures taken to enhance the protective function of forests and conclusion of a SFC opinion on enhancement of protective functions of forests (activity 11.1).

In this mid-term evaluation survey several Member States report activities in relation to the monitoring or prevention of natural hazards. These activities are e.g. inclusion of Key Action 11 related activities in the NFPs or rural development programmes (e.g. CY, CZ, EL, FR, HU), legal restriction on management in special areas (LT), legal recognition of protective functions in areas where they are a priority (SK, HU), recognition of forest functions and activities undertaken at a lower level of planning: local, regional or in protected areas (IT, SI, LV, RO). Furthermore, many countries report activities in relation to the prevention and monitoring of natural hazards, such as efforts in coordination (AT), floods (RO) or fire (SI).

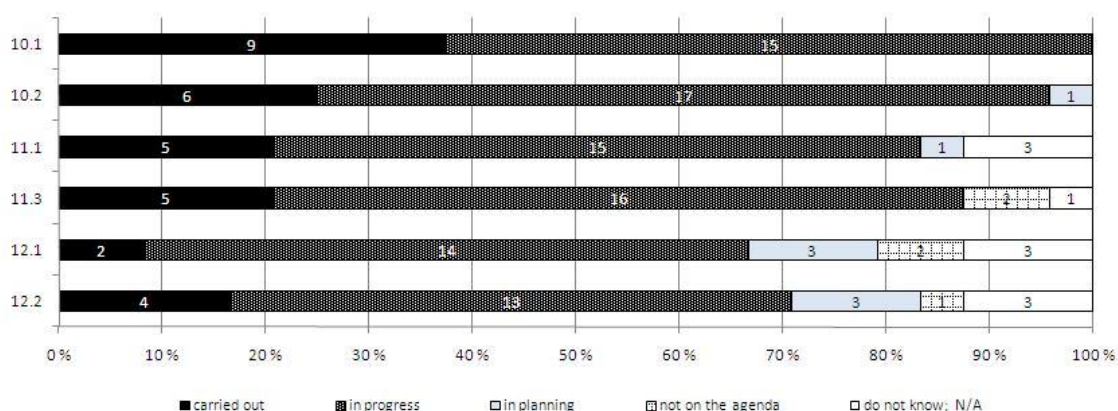


In parallel, the FP7 has addressed forest-related natural hazards through several research calls, from its Environment line: five specific calls in 2007, five in 2008 and three in 2009.

| Key Action 12 Explore the potential of urban and peri-urban forests |  |               |             |
|---|--|---------------|-------------|
| Activity  |  | Leading actor | Timeframe   |
| 12.1  | Review and integrate methodologies for evaluating the social and human impacts of urban and peri-urban forests   | COM, SFC      | 2008-2010   |
| 12.2  | Explore structures to engage local communities and non-traditional stakeholders in planning, creating, managing and using urban and peri-urban forests | SFC, COM      | 2009 / 2010 |

The target of the Key Action 12 is to explore the potential of urban and peri-urban forest in providing amenity values, recreational and preventive healthcare services. Activities in this Key Action will start in 2009.

In the mid-term evaluation survey Member States report some activities related to Key Action 12, such as studies (CY), campaigns to highlight the values of forests (IT, FI), inventory of forest with high social values (SE), educational and recreational activities around cities (LU), regional activities to highlight the values of forest (IT) or strict forest management measures in forest protection belts around cities (LT). A FP6 project “Peri-urban Land Use Relationships – Strategies and Sustainability Assessment Tools for Urban – Rural Linkages” (PLUREL, 2007-2010) is coordinated by the University of Copenhagen with participation from 14 European countries and China (DK).



**Figure 7. EU FAP Objective 3 implementation status in the Member States.** Activities where the Member States are indicated in the EU FAP Work programme 2007-2011 as Actors – on their own or together with the Commission. Activity numbers refer to the Key Actions (see text boxes above). N=24, no information from Portugal, Belgium and Malta.

Though activities of the EU FAP Objective 3 were scheduled in the EU FAP Work programme 2007-2013 mainly for the second half of the implementation period, the Member States have been highly active carrying out national activities (Figure 7). Practically all countries are active in environmental education (activity 10.1) and promoting SFM (activity 10.2). The activities related to urban and peri-urban forests (KA12) are to some extent not so high on the agenda across the EU (about 70% of respondents indicate activities carried out or in progress). These activities are ongoing at the national and sub-national levels in parallel to EU FAP.

**OBJECTIVE 4: Fostering coordination and communication**

| <b>Key Action 13 Strengthen the role of the Standing Forestry Committee</b> |   |                      |                  |
|---|---|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>   |   | <b>Leading actor</b> | <b>Timeframe</b> |
| 13.1  | Establish yearly work programmes for the Standing Forestry Committee  | COM, SFC             | 2006-2010        |
| 13.2  | Organise joint meetings between the members of the SFC and the AGFC, and with the Advisory Committee on Community Policy regarding Forestry and Forest-based Industries | COM                  | 2007-2011        |
| 13.3  | Strengthen the active involvement of the SFC in its advisory role in policy formulation and implementation processes  | COM                  | 2007-2011        |
| 13.4  | Adjust the working methods of the SFC by making use of ad hoc working groups  | COM                  | 2007-2011        |
| 13.5  | Regularly organise meetings of the EU Forest Directors  | MS                   | 2007-2011        |

The target of the Key Action 13 and strengthening of the role of SFC is to improve coordination and communication at multiple organisational and institutional levels. In 2007-2008 the SFC had ten meetings, with an active participation of the Member States: on average 23-24 Member States attended the meetings (only Malta has not participated in the SFC). The annual work programmes for the SFC (activity 13.1) were established starting in 2007. The draft programmes are compiled by the Commission on the basis of the EU FAP multiannual Work Programme. The draft is discussed within the Commission (Inter-services' Group on Forestry ISG), and finalised in the SFC together with the Member States. The annual programmes include a progress report by the Commission on the EU FAP implementation so far, as well as the SFC meetings and their preliminary agendas for the forthcoming year.

The communication between the SFC and the AGFC is arranged through the Commission reports on SFC to the AGFC and through and the AGFC chairpersons' participation in the SFC meetings (activity 13.2). There is a regular exchange of information concerning the EU FAP, and participation of AGFC and AC-FBI representatives in the SFC ad hoc Working Groups. Stakeholders have participated actively in the AGFC meetings, three per year during 2007-2008. The AGFC has concluded its resolutions on e.g. the prioritisation of EU FAP activities at the stage of preparing the multiannual work programme in 2006, and e.g. the FBI Communication in 2008.

Strengthening of the active involvement of the SFC in its advisory role in policy formulation and implementation 2007-2011 (activity 13.3.) has been targeted by formulating SFC opinions on certain policy issues. During 2007-2009, the SFC has so far issued the following opinions: (1) Opinion on forthcoming forest sector research activities within FP7 (2008), (2) Opinion on the mobilisation and efficient use of wood and wood residues for energy generation (2009), (3) Opinion on valuation of and compensation for non-marketed forest goods and services (2009).

The working methods of SFC have been adjusted (activity 13.4) by establishing ad hoc Working Groups as suggested in the EU FAP Work programme. There have been two parallel Working Groups active in 2007-2008 on "Valuation and Compensation Methods of Non-Wood Forest Goods and Services" and on "Mobilisation and Efficient Use of Wood and Wood Residues for Energy Generation". These groups had seven and



six meetings during the period of 1.5 years. Both groups concluded a report on their work, and results and recommendations were discussed in the SFC. Working Groups consist of representatives of Member States and stakeholders with invited experts from e.g. Commission and research institutions. Two Working Groups have been established in 2009: Working Group on Climate Change and Forestry and Working Group on Public Procurement for Wood and Wood-based Products.

EU Forest Directors meetings (activity 13.5) are regularly arranged by the Presidencies: 2007 in Germany and Portugal, 2008 in Slovenia and France, and 2009 in Czech Republic and Sweden. The meetings typically include a conference and excursion. The Member States report active participation in these meetings.

| <b>Key Action 14 Strengthen coordination between policy areas in forest-related matters</b> |  |                      |                  |
|---|--|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>   |  | <b>Leading actor</b> | <b>Timeframe</b> |
| 14.1  | Appoint a co-ordinator for forest-related policies in each relevant Directorate-General  | COM                  | 2007             |
| 14.2  | Regularly inform the SFC of the initiatives and actions in different policy areas that are of relevance to the work of the Committee | COM                  | 2007-2011        |
| 14.3  | Strengthen the role of the Inter-Service Group on Forestry   | COM                  | 2007-2011        |

The target of the Key Action 14 is to contribute to improved coordination across policy areas within the Commission.

A list of contact persons for forest-related policies in the Commission departments (DG) was compiled in 2007, and presented to the SFC (activity 14.1). The list includes contact persons in units from 14 Commission DGs. List of DGs is consistent with the ISG on forestry members (2001), but excluding DG Enlargement and the Secretariat General.

SFC and AGFC have been regularly informed (activity 14.2) on initiatives and actions in different policy areas by respective Commission DGs.

The ISG on forestry was established at the end of 2001 to improve coordination within the Commission. It has regular meetings on invitation by DG AGRI (activity 14.3). There are in total 16 DGs including the Commission Secretariat General in the invitation list. In 2007-2008 the ISG had in total seven meetings, and handled e.g. the annual work programme for SFC, matters under preparation in several policy areas in relation to the forest sector, including international meetings where the Commission participates in and/or follows-up the processes. On average 5-7 DGs have participated actively and regularly in the meetings during 2007-2008 i.e. DG AGRI, DG ENV, DG SANCO, DG ENTR, DG TREN, JRC Ispra/ Italy, ESTAT Luxemburg, DG RTD, DG EMPL and DG DEV. Furthermore, e.g. DG TRADE and DG MARKT have participated in the meetings with specific issues relating to their field.

| <b>Key Action 15 Apply the open method of coordination (OMC) to national forest programmes</b> |   |                      |                  |
|--|---|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>  |   | <b>Leading actor</b> | <b>Timeframe</b> |
| 15.1   | Explore the OMC and its potential to be used for voluntary coordination in the field of forest policy | COM                  | 2010-2011        |

The target of the Key Action 15 is to explore the open method of coordination (OMC) and its potential to be used for voluntary coordination in the field of forest policy. Activity is scheduled for the second half of the EU FAP implementation.

| <b>Key Action 16 Strengthen the EU profile in international forest-related processes</b> |   |                      |                  |
|--|---|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>  |   | <b>Leading actor</b> | <b>Timeframe</b> |
| 16.1   | Participation in international processes relevant to forests and forestry | MS, COM              | 2007-2011        |
| 16.2   | Participation in the MCPFE process  | COM                  | 2007-2011        |

The target of the Key Action 16 is a high degree of coordination both within the Commission and in the Member States to ensure coherence in different forest-related international processes. This covers on one hand, participation in international processes relevant to forests and forestry such as CBD, UNFF, UNFCCC, UNCCD (activity 16.1), and on the other hand, participation in the Ministerial Conference on Protection of Forests in Europe (activity 16.2).

The means for improving coordination are the ISG and the SCF. The ISG on forestry handles the Commission involvement in the international meetings and processes related to forestry – e.g. participation from the Commission in the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe MCPFE, in 2007 the Warsaw conference and declarations, and in 2008 in several working groups have been discussed in the ISG. The Commission informs the SFC (and AGFC) meetings about the international meetings and processes, as well as the Commission communications and regulations.

The Commission Communication entitle “Addressing the challenges of deforestation and forest degradation to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss” (COM(2008) 645 final) – so called REDD communication – was adopted in October 2008, and is a contribution to Key Action 16. The communication has been presented to the AGFC in July and December 2008.

The coordination of Member States for EU participation in the international processes takes place in Council Working Parties and is led by the Presidencies. All Member States (23 responses) indicate participation in the international processes: some countries state that they are active in the international processes in general (FI, SE, IE); some countries give more details on the forums and forms of participation. MCPFE and FAO COFO, UN-ECE and the UNECE/FAO working groups, as well as UNFF and UNFCCC are specified in the Member State responses.

| <b>Key Action 17 Encourage the use of wood and other forest products from sustainably managed forests</b> |  |                      |                  |
|---|--|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>   |  | <b>Leading actor</b> | <b>Timeframe</b> |
| 17.1  | Communication concerning the competitiveness of forest-based industries  | COM                  | 2008             |
| 17.2  | Exchange experience between MS, Commission services and stakeholders on developing guidelines for application of the Public Procurement Directive to forest products, in order to achieve better compatibility with each other and also in support of the EU-FLEGT Action Plan | COM, SFC             | 2007-2008 –      |

The Commission Communication on innovative and sustainable forest-based industries in the EU (COM(2008)113) was adopted in February 2008 (activity 17.1). The Commission presented the communication in the SFC and the AGFC meetings in 2007-2008. The Communication addresses the challenges that the forest-based industries face in a 19-point action plan. A reference is made to the SFC ad hoc Working Group on

Wood Mobilisation (EU FAP Key Action 4) under the FBI action “Access to raw materials”. In December 2008, the Commission arranged FLEGT Industry Information Meeting in Brussels for a variety of EU and non-EU industrial representatives on the due diligence principle, US Lacey Act amendment and updating of FLEGT. The AC-FBI had a meeting in April 2009.

Exchange experience between the Member States, Commission and stakeholders on developing guidelines for application of the Public Procurement (PP) Directive to forest products started in 2007 (activity 17.2). The aim of the activity is to achieve better compatibility of the guidelines with each other and also in support of the EU FLEGT Action Plan. The SFC meeting in May 2007 was informed about the legal framework for public procurement and the Green Public Procurement (GPP) policy by the Commission, and the discussion followed in July 2007 with reports from national delegations on development and application of GPP guidelines for forest products. Two conferences were arranged in 2008: (1) “Setting criteria for sustainable timber in public procurement” in April 2008 organised by the Danish Ministry of Environment together with the Commission, and (2) “Public Procurement Policy on Wood and Wood-based Products” in Brussels in June 2008 organised by the Commission. SFC meetings were debriefed on the conferences. The SFC ad hoc Working Group on Public Procurement for Wood and Wood-based Products started its work in 2009.

In the EU FAP mid-term evaluation inventory 15 Member States report that the guidelines are either carried out or in progress (public procurement directive / green public procurement / responsible public procurement of forest products): e.g. in France the PP guidance for wood and wood products from 2005 is currently under revision, and in Denmark the revised PP guidelines will be available in summer 2009. Seven countries are planning the guidance (CY, CZ, HU, IT, RO, SI, SK), e.g. Slovakia will elaborate a proposal for national public procurement policy for wood and wood-based products by 2013.

Stakeholders have been involved in the consultations for the preparation of the FBI Communication. In its meeting July 2008, the AGFC discussed the Communication and its 19 actions and concluded a resolution on the actions recommended for prioritisation in the EU Commission activities and financial interventions. Stakeholders have also participated in the PP workshops, and are represented in the SFC ad hoc Working Group on Public Procurement for Wood and Wood-based Products. Several stakeholders have their own activities, events and campaigns concerning promotion of wood and wood products.

| <b>Key Action 18 Improve information exchange and communication</b> |  |                      |                  |
|---|--|----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Activity</b>   |  | <b>Leading actor</b> | <b>Timeframe</b> |
| 18.1  | Develop a communication strategy on forestry and exchange experience between MS on forest communication  | COM, SFC             | 2007-2009        |
| 18.2  | Develop a “forestry” site on the Europa website and ensure that forest-related information in the relevant websites of the MS is available and can be linked with the Europa forestry site | COM, MS              | 2007-2008        |
| 18.3  | Work on the development of a European Forest Information and Communication Platform  | COM, MS              | 2006-2008        |
| 18.4  | Organise visibility events, such as a “Forest Week” or “Forest Day” to raise awareness of the benefits of sustainable forest management  | COM, MS              | 2008 / 2009      |

The target of the Key Action 18 is to ensure availability and communication of up-to-date information for enhancing public awareness and consideration of forestry in policy-making. As a first step to defining a communication strategy (activity 18.1) a study on “Shaping Forest Communication in the European Union: public perceptions of forests and forestry” has been ordered by the Commission. The study covers all EU27 and the results are forthcoming in 2009. Furthermore, during 2007-2009, the Commission has participated in UNECE/FAO forest communicators’ network together with several Member States and stakeholders.

The Commission forestry site (activity 18.2)<sup>45</sup> is part of the DG AGRI web-pages and it includes basic documents on EU FAP, e.g. on forestry strategy and FAP, as well as lists of decisions of the SFC meetings. Links to other forest-related web-sites by the Commission are also listed. In the document library e.g. a number of studies and the SFC ad hoc Working Group final reports are available. The Commission published a brochure on the EU FAP in 2008 (available from the forestry web-site in English, French and German).

A Preparatory Action on European Forest Information and Communication Platform EFICP (activity 18.3) has been concluded, and the JRC demonstration version of EFICP was presented in a workshop in December 2008 together with the follow-up and development of the European Forest Data Centre (EFDAC). The EFICP has become an integral part of EFDAC. It is fully operational but is not able to connect to national systems as these are not interoperable at the moment. The JRC is continuing the work in the context of the further development of EFDAC (see Key Action 8).

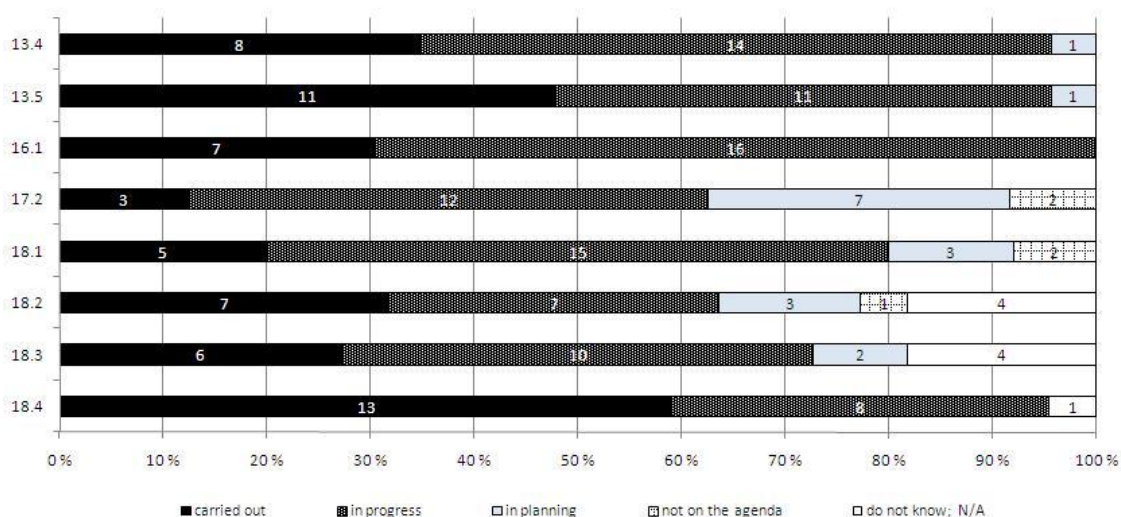
The main visibility event for the forest sector (activity 18.4) during 2007-2009 was the European Forest Week in October 2008. The event was initiated by the MCPFE and UNECE/FAO. The Commission participated in the meetings arranged in Rome (UNECE/FAO) and Brussels (e.g. by EESC). Furthermore, several national, regional and local events were arranged by the stakeholders and in many European countries, (e.g. in CY, EE, FR, HU, LV, PL, SK). The Member States report participation in the MCPFE/FAO forestry week e.g. as regional and local level events by the forestry organisations.

In the mid-term evaluation survey several Member States indicate long traditions in arranging regular Forest Days or Forest Weeks e.g. Poland, Latvia and Bulgaria report that Forest Days have been organised in these countries since the late 1920s. Also regional (cross-border) events are arranged e.g. the “Weekend du Bois” between Luxembourg, the Wallonia region in Belgium, and the Champagne-Ardennes region in France. Many Member States also underline the importance of information and communication measures in planning and implementing the NFPs.

Stakeholders are active in arranging visibility events and they participate in the FCN.

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<sup>45</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/index_en.htm)



**Figure 8. EU FAP Objective 4 implementation status in the Member States.**  
Activities where the Member States are indicated in the EU FAP Work programme 2007-2011 as Actors – on their own or together with the Commission. Activity numbers refer to the Key Actions (see text boxes above). N=23, no information from Greece, Portugal, Belgium and Malta.

Figure 8 shows that the activities envisaged in the EU FAP Work programme 2007-2013 for the Member States to implement the EU FAP Objective 4 are to a large extent ongoing and reflected in the national agendas. Though activities in relation to guidelines for application of the Public Procurement Directive to forest products (activity 17.2) are not ongoing in all Member States, several countries indicate that the activity is in planning.

## 5 Evaluation of the EU Forest Action Plan

This chapter is structured in accordance with the six Evaluation themes and 11 Evaluation questions defined for the mid-term evaluation. At the beginning of the text for each of the evaluation themes, there is a figure of intervention logic (IL) illustrating for the EU FAP Objectives the connection (causality logic) between the EU FAP Key Actions, outputs from the activities carried out and the expected effects and long-term impacts.

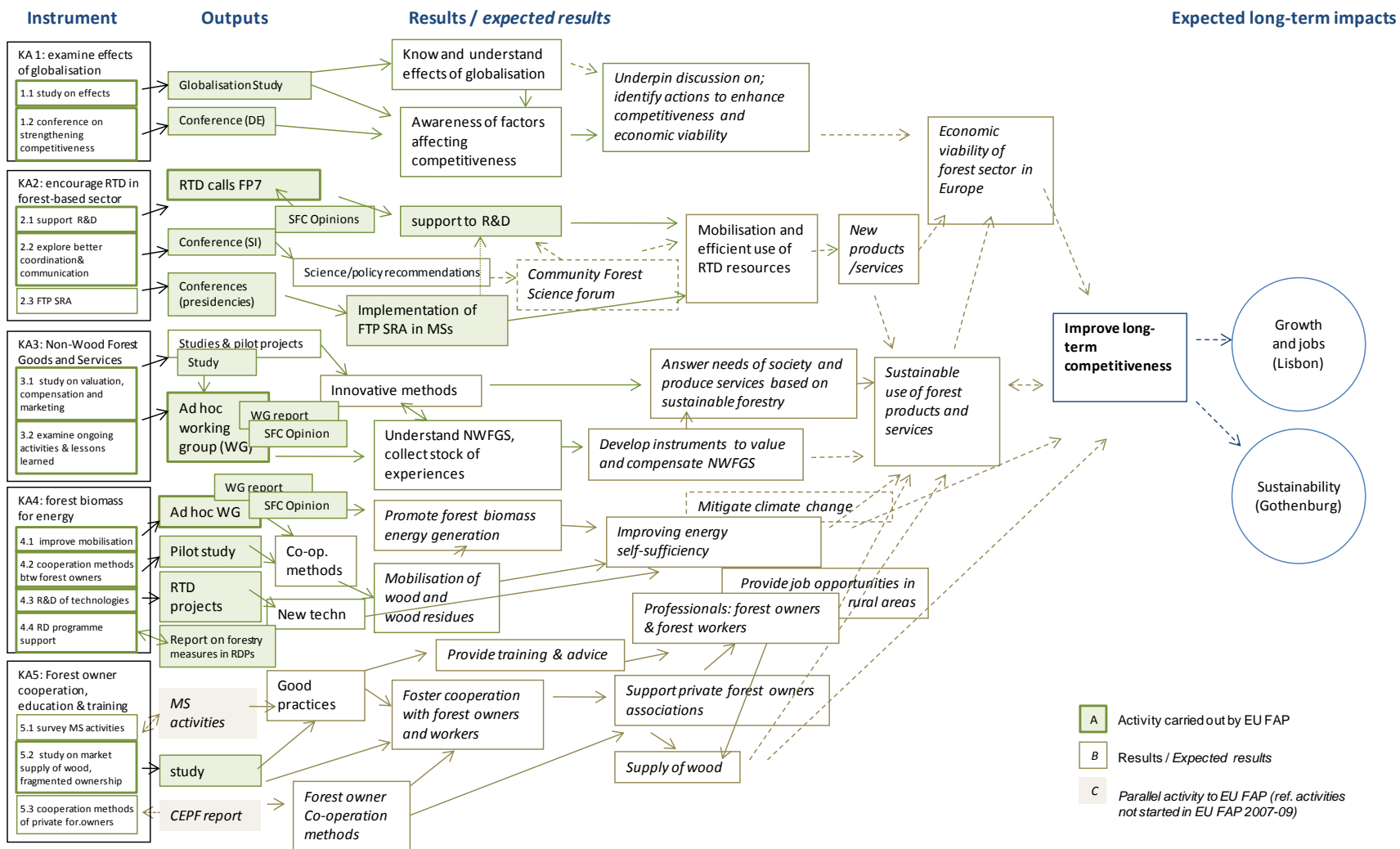
### ***EVALUATION THEME 1 Improving competitiveness and enhancing sustainable forestry***

The target of the EU FAP Objective 1 is to improve the long-term competitiveness of the forest sector and to enhance the sustainable use of forest products and services. Objective 1 includes five Key Actions covering the following themes: globalisation, research and development, non-wood forest goods and services, bioenergy and cooperation between forest owners and education and training in forestry (see Figure 9 IL model).

***EQ1: To what extent have the activities of key actions 1-5 of the Forest Action Plan to enhance long-term competitiveness of the EU forest sector, been carried out so far effectively and efficiently?***

As described in the implementation of the Key Actions 1-5 (Chapter 4), the activities in the five Key Actions of the EU FAP Objective 1 were conducted in 2007-2009 as planned in the Work Programme. The first half of the EU FAP implementation period focused on this theme. The implementation was supported by the fact that the actions were mostly formulated very precisely already in the EU FAP and its work programme.

In the mid-term evaluation surveys, the study on the effects of globalisation on the economic viability of EU forestry (Key Action 1) is specifically mentioned as a useful output from the EU FAP by the Commission [2 DG responses], Member States [5 responses] and stakeholders [2 responses]. According to the feedback by the Commission and a Member State the study contributes to better understanding on the effects of globalisation, and thus provides information for policy and decision making. At the stage of the mid-term evaluation in 2009, it is not possible to identify how this better understanding has contributed to measures to enhance the competitiveness of the forest sector. The economic crisis 2008/2009 has affected the forest sector in the EU, and in the mid-term evaluation surveys Member States [2 responses] point out the need for further measures on viability of forestry and the forest sector. Stakeholders [3 responses] also mention this perspective in their responses. The study and the discussions in e.g. the conference in 2007 during German presidency are valuable contributions to the aim of enhancing the competitiveness by keeping the topic on the agenda. The EU FAP work programme does not foresee follow-up activity. Merely, the question is whether the discussions and outputs have reached the key policy and decision makers in order to have influence on this process (see Evaluation Question 2).



**Figure 9: IL model for the Evaluation Theme 1 Improving competitiveness and enhancing sustainable forestry (EU FAP Objective 1).**

Research and technological development (Key Action 2) has been supported with regular exchange of information through the ISG, SFC and AGFC. Forest-based sector research and development has been strengthened in FP7 in comparison to former framework programmes, and this is visible in the number of forest sector relevant themes in the calls for proposals, number of projects approved and amount of financing allocated to forest sector projects. The establishment of the FTP is not a direct effect of the EU FAP, but the EU FAP has contributed to strengthening the role of the FTP. According to the Commission [2 DG responses] in the mid-term evaluation interviews, the political support by the EU FAP for the FTP was registered by decision makers and a broad support strengthens the role and impact of the FTP. This view is confirmed in the responses of Member States and stakeholders: establishment of the FTP and its activities are mentioned by several Member States [9 responses] as an important activity in relation to the EU FAP Objective 1, and stakeholders [3 responses] see that mobilisation of resources for FTP research is strengthened due to the EU FAP.

The objective of the EU FAP is to encourage RTD in the forest-based sector, i.e. to affect mobilisation and efficient use of RTD resources. FP7 is the EU funding programme for research and development. All in all, the mid-term evaluation shows that there seems to be a high awareness of the FP7 research projects enhanced through the EU FAP. But there are also other forms of support for research activities, such as ERA-net scheme and the COST programme. ERA-net aims to support network research programmes carried out at national or regional level, with a view to their mutual opening and the development and implementation of joint activities. It already includes relevant topics such as BiodivERsA, which includes interdisciplinary research on forest ecosystems, and WoodWisdom-net, which works on forest-based industries. COST is an intergovernmental framework for European Cooperation in Science and Technology, allowing the coordination of nationally-funded research on a European level. Thus COST is independent from the EU and there is no linkage to the EU FAP. However, both the EU and national resources are mobilised in several relevant COST actions that relate to the objectives of the EU FAP. Examples of such are the actions on e.g. forest externalities (E45), innovation and development policies (E51), forest management and water cycle (FP0601), post-fire forest management (FP0701) and climate change and silviculture (FP0703). The conference on Forest Governance and the Role of Forestry Research (Key Action 2) was arranged during the Slovenian presidency in 2008. Conference recommendations were reported to the SFC and AGFC, but the original aim in the EU FAP to explore the possibility of establishing a Community forest science forum was not discussed. The encouraging example, how the EU FAP has contributed to FP7 allocations at the EU level, raises expectations concerning how the EU FAP could contribute to a more efficient use of research allocations at the national and sub-national levels in the EU. The FTP is already working towards this aim and building a strong agenda to mobilise the national resources. The forest science forum, as identified in the EU FAP work programme 2007-2011, could be a solution towards more 'interdisciplinary' approach i.e. innovation input from outside the traditional forest sector utilising ecological, social and cultural dimensions as the basis for exploring potential new products and services for future markets.



The SFC ad hoc Working Group on Valuation and Compensation Methods of Non-Wood Forest Goods and Services (NWFGS) and the parallel FORVALUE study (Key Action 3) are indicated by the Commission, Member States and stakeholders as efficient and effective working methods. As a next step from the discussions and the study report, the SFC concluded its opinion on the topic in 2009. At the mid-term, however it is too early to assess how this effects on implementation at the EU level, in the Commission or in the Member States. In the mid-term evaluation survey several Member States indicate specific pilot studies and innovative examples for financing mechanisms. Because the mid-term evaluation is carried out in 2009, it is not possible to make linkages between these activities and the EU FAP. Investigation on how the SFC opinion and the Working Group contribute to the national level would need to be carried out after a few years. However, the mid-term evaluation did go further into detail in the activities carried out by the Commission and in the Member States (for further details see Annex 2). The investigation showed that also other activities and e.g. further studies have been conducted both at the EU and Member State levels. These studies refer mostly to the many forest functions and their valuation, sometimes also to their compensation possibilities. There seems to be less investigation on and awareness of marketing and new financing mechanisms. Though exchange of best practices took place in the Working Group, there was no specific information distributed in the SFC on ongoing national level studies or projects carried out at the sub-national level e.g. with ERDF financing.

Biomass and energy questions (Key Action 4) are an important theme not only in the EU FAP but also in e.g. energy policy and climate change discussions. The report of the SFC ad hoc Working Group on Mobilisation and Efficient Use of Wood and Wood Residues for Energy Generation was seen by the Commission and Member States as a very valuable output from the EU FAP. The working group collected expertise and different viewpoints to discuss the factors that are relevant regarding wood supply, further potential and its mobilisation. On the basis of this work the SFC formulated its opinion in 2009. The opinion expresses a common view of the EU 27 Member States, and it can be seen as a more powerful tool to influence the EU level discussions than views from single countries or individual experts. These EU level discussions are ongoing in respective Council Working Parties, in the EU institutions and in the stakeholder federations.

In general, the SFC ad hoc working groups (Key Actions 3 and 4) are specifically mentioned by the Commission [5 DG responses], Member States [6 responses] and stakeholders [9 responses] as good practices and the most important benefits from the EU FAP. This new working method is very much appreciated. But at the same time, it is emphasised that the follow-up steps are yet to be seen. Especially stakeholders underline the importance of bringing the work done “from talks to practice”. At the mid-term stage this work remains to be done at the level of the EU, in the Commission, in the Member States as well as by the stakeholders.

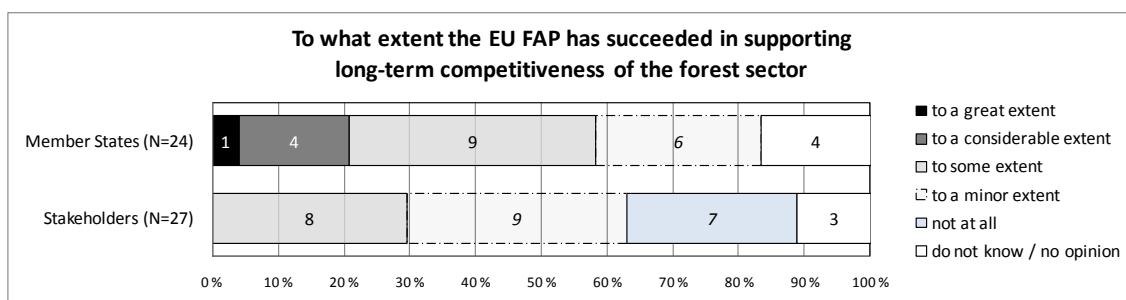
Some follow-up activities triggered by the Working Groups and studies are perceivable already at the stage of the mid-term evaluation. This regards especially questions on wood mobilisation, where the Commission reports the following steps: a study has been commissioned on “Prospects for market supply from fragmented forest structures” (EU

FAP Activity 5.2), and results of the Working Group are utilised by the Commission in the ongoing work on formulating a Renewable Energy Directive. The results have also been useful for other ongoing processes and discussions e.g. in pan-European framework of MCPFE and UNECE/FAO. There is much interest on the topic of wood mobilisation in the Member States at the national and sub-national levels, but also by the stakeholder organisations. Several studies and workshops have been arranged parallel to EU FAP. The EU FAP working group and its results were presented by the Commission in the “Workshop on Strategies for increased mobilisation of wood resources from sustainable sources” in June 2009 in Grenoble. This workshop was arranged jointly by MCPFE, UNECE and several stakeholder organisations.

In the light of the results of the Working Group and the active carry over to other topic-related activities by different actors, the Working Group on wood mobilisation for energy generation can be raised as an example of a very effective and efficient implementation method of the EU FAP. The EU FAP utilises expertise from the Commission, Member States, stakeholders as well as research institutions and this contributes to the EU level processes and discussions. Similar reflection is made by the Commission also in relation to the Working Group on NWFGS, where the results of discussions in the EU FAP could be brought to the discussion of public goods in agriculture. This shows the timing and usefulness of the results produced in the EU FAP is dependent on the interest not only within the ‘traditional forest sector’ but also in the interrelated sectors e.g. energy and agriculture. Good timing of EU FAP activities opens possibilities to disseminate the results to other ongoing processes both in the EU, in individual Member States and at the pan-European level.

Compared to the good feedback on SFC Working Groups as a working method, feedback on the SFC opinions is ambiguous: there are expectations expressed both by the Commission and the Member States that the SFC opinions would contribute to the implementation both at national and EU levels. The EU level means contribution to discussions in the Council, as well as to initiatives prepared in the Commission. The example of SFC opinions on RTD programme FP7 shows that opinions can lead direct impact. Whether this can be shown also for the SFC opinions on wood mobilisation and NWFGS, requires more time but also a mechanism to follow this up.

The mid-term evaluation inventory of implementation in the Member States (see figure 5 in Chapter 4) shows that topics highlighted in the EU FAP are also reflected in the national agendas. Bioenergy is mentioned by several Member States as one of the themes which have been given more importance at the national level due to the discussions and emphasis in the EU FAP. Otherwise it is difficult to show a direct effect from the EU FAP on the national activities. It is worth pointing out that although the EU FAP activities in 2007-2008 emphasised the Objective 1, the mid-term evaluation survey shows that the themes relating to competitiveness are not reflected in the national agendas in all EU Member States. Though raising competitiveness and economic aspects on the agenda is appreciated, an even more comprehensive approach to the forest sector as a whole is seen to be important by the Member States [5 responses]. A more comprehensive approach would mean closer connection between the actions developing forestry and the forest-based industries. This feedback can also be found implicitly in the responses of the stakeholders.



**Figure 10. Member State and stakeholder assessments on the success of the EU FAP Objective 1.**

The mid-term evaluation investigated from the Member States and the stakeholders on how successful the EU FAP has been so far in supporting long-term competitiveness of the forest sector (see Figure 10). Member States tend to be more positive in their assessment. The stakeholder assessments – especially those of producers – are more negative and this same tendency is visible in the assessments given on other EU FAP objectives. Stakeholders look forward to concrete results: in order to measure success of the EU FAP they expect to see the practical implications from discussions, studies and opinions and how the EU level action contributes to activities at national, regional and local levels. Forest owner cooperation and training (Key Action 5) is pointed out by a stakeholder as an important activity that has not yet been started in the EU FAP.

The success of the EU FAP is not only the successful implementation of the plan, but also the contribution towards the expected effects and long-term impacts to the competitiveness of the forest sector in the EU. The EU FAP Work Programme does not envisage a follow-up or a feedback discussion on measures taken in the Key Actions 1-5. There are expectations on what happens next: the Commission expects carry over from the discussions to implementation in the Member States; the Member States expect implications for processes ongoing in the Commission; and the stakeholders expect practical results at national, regional and local levels. Taking into account the good outputs produced, and the joint effort at the stage preparing the EU FAP, it would also be important to set milestones for follow-up to illustrate how these expectations are realised.

Activities of the EU FAP in 2007-2008 concentrated to the Objective 1, but the Work Programme does not foresee follow-up of e.g. exploring the effects of globalisation, the Working Groups or the SFC opinions. An extensive monitoring of initiatives and activities in the EU or in the individual Member States is not feasible within the framework of the EU FAP. There are also activities to be covered in the original plan, e.g. forest owner cooperation (Key Action 5). Follow-up and sharing of experience on the measures taken could also be arranged in a lighter manner, for example as a specialist seminar. The activity could link to parallel sectors and outside the ‘traditional forest sector’, but also to sub-national level with the aim of sharing information how the good intentions are brought as practical measures, and how the existing financial resources – EAFRD but also ERDF – can be mobilised for improving the forest sector competitiveness across the EU.

## **Conclusions**

The EU FAP activities contributing to the long-term competitiveness of the forest sector have been carried out to a large extent according to the Work Programme and, in this respect, the implementation of the work programme is efficient. The action concerning the forest owner co-operation and enhancement of education and training in forestry (Key Action 5) is to be started in 2009. The Standing Forestry Committee (SFC) ad hoc Working Groups as well as the studies produced in the EU FAP have been an effective and efficient way to mobilise expertise to support the EU FAP implementation. It remains for the Member States, the Commission as well as other stakeholders to put the outcomes from the discussions into practice.

At the stage of the mid-term evaluation, showing the contribution of the EU FAP to the long-term competitiveness of the sector is difficult. An indirect impact on the competitiveness can be expected, e.g. due to the knowledge gained by the studies and due to better definition of priorities and increased allocations of the 7<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme (FP7) resources for the forest-sector research in the EU, and due to the support provided under the rural development policy. Furthermore, a number of Member States indicate that the emphasis given in the EU FAP to, for example: bioenergy, non-wood goods and services, and research allocations, have an effect on the national agendas. Thus, there would be follow-up and activities in the Member States, but these activities cannot yet be shown after only two years of the EU FAP implementation.

There are no follow-up or monitoring mechanisms envisaged in the EU FAP multiannual work programme 2007-2011. Nor are there financial resources earmarked for the EU FAP implementation. The existing resources, rural development and regional policy funding, are to be utilised for financing the activities in support of the EU FAP. The Member States indicate that both EU and national funds are being utilised to enhance the competitiveness of the forest sector. Follow-up of activities already carried out in the EU FAP Objective 1 would be an additional measure to the activities defined in the EU FAP Work Programme, but follow-up would be needed to make the progress towards enhancing the competitiveness visible as well as to share good practices between the Member States, EU institutions and stakeholders.

## **Recommendations**

In order to show the effect of the EU FAP Objective 1 on the long term competitiveness, the Commission and SFC should discuss the possibilities to arrange monitoring of Member State activities in enhancing the competitiveness and follow-up of the activities already carried out in the EU FAP Objective 1 during 2007-2008. A decision on whether there is a need for such follow-up should be taken by the Commission and Member States together, including deciding who is responsible for arranging such measures and in which way (resources).

The mid-term evaluation could be used to discuss between the Member States, the Commission, and the stakeholders what is understood by a more holistic approach e.g. inter-linkages between forestry and parallel sectors and how this could contribute to new innovation and building of a viable and competitive forest sector for the future. In order to ensure long-term competitiveness of the forest sector, besides the strong focus on timber and bio-energy, also innovations in non-wood forest goods and services should be fostered. The forest science forum could contribute towards a more interdisciplinary approach. The Commission together with the Member States and stakeholders should take up this measure as it is already envisaged in the EU FAP work programme.

***EQ2: Have the results of the actions mentioned above reached and influenced the key policymakers and stakeholders in a way that competitiveness is or may be influenced positively?***

According to the mid-term evaluation surveys, the results produced in the EU FAP Key Actions 1-5 are known to the actors directly participating in the implementation of the EU FAP (Commission, Member States and the AGFC representatives of the stakeholders). Those actors covered in the survey who are not directly involved in the implementation of the EU FAP are not aware of the results – or when it comes to the stakeholders, not even aware of the EU FAP, its aims or what type of results are expected to be achieved.

The study on the effects of globalisation on the economic viability of EU forestry (Key Action 1) was published, preliminary results presented at the conference on strengthening competitiveness of forestry, and results discussed in the SFC and AGFC. According to the Commission the study is often used as a source of reference in relation to globalisation questions of forest sector. It is however, not known how far the results have been carried on to the Member State level. In the mid-term evaluation survey, Germany indicates a follow-up initiative from the competitiveness seminar arranged in 2007.

The support for RTD (Key Action 2) on forest-related research has realised in FP7 calls for proposals and number of research projects initiated through the calls. As already discussed in relation to effectiveness and efficiency of the Key Action 2, there is a link between the EU FAP and mobilisation of resources for forest sector research. The mid-term evaluation feedback shows that EU FAP has contributed together with the parallel FTP to the political recognition of the sector and allocation of FP7 resources to forest-based sector topics. The FTP is very active and can be seen as a highly successful initiative. The fact that the EU FAP mentions the FTP provides important political support strengthening the linkage of Strategic Research Agenda, FP7 as well as the linkage of National Research Agendas in the Member States. The EU FAP was thus important but not a sole factor in strengthening the forestry topics in FP7. In the mid-term evaluation surveys a number of Member States [2 responses] indicate that emphases given in the EU FAP to research have lead to investment in research also being emphasised in the national agendas (section 2.2.4).

The mid-term evaluation surveys did not investigate to what extent this recognition is visible outside the forest sector – i.e. in parallel sectors such as energy, environment or agriculture – and does it contribute to building of cross-sectoral alliances to improve competitiveness. Key decision makers and stakeholders in the parallel sectors are not directly targeted through the organisational set-up for the implementation of the EU FAP (SFC, AGFC, ISG), but the connection would be envisaged through SFC, AGFC and ISG members and the contacts and networks they have. Based on the mid-term evaluation observation that the forest sector stakeholders who are not directly involved in the EU FAP implementation are not aware of the EU FAP, it can be expected that extension to sectors other than forestry and the forest-based industry is also weak. The general understanding within the forest sector is that the communication to the outside world should be strengthened, and this perspective is confirmed by the mid-term evaluation feedback. However this communication is not one way from the forest sector to other sectors, but also the other sectors can contribute to the innovation and competitive advantage of the forest sector e.g. in the fields of bioenergy, recreation, biodiversity conservation or ecosystem services of forests.

The working method of SFC ad hoc Working Groups (Key Actions 3 and 4) with direct involvement of experts from the Member States, stakeholders, Commission and research organisations means that a number of relevant stakeholders and policy-makers at the EU level as well as in the Member States are well-informed about the EU FAP. However, the specific impact how this has influenced the policy making is hard to assess. At the point of the mid-term evaluation, the SFC opinions on Working Groups were under finalisation – thus, it is not yet possible to investigate e.g. how the SFC opinion on NWFGS is disseminated to the national processes in the Member States. As part of the mid-term evaluation case study on NWFGS, the Member States were asked how far the results of the Key Action 3 have reached policymakers: most countries report no impact or very limited impact – partly because it is too early to assess the impact. A number of Member States reported that there is information sharing, and the policy makers are aware of activities and results of the national activities relating to NWFGS.

The mid-term evaluation surveys show several linkages to parallel processes (e.g. wood mobilisation and activities in Member States and as a pan-European effort), as well as activities in the Member States (including sub-national activities). More time is required to show linkages from the EU FAP activities to activities triggered at the EU level, in individual Member States, or as an impact to stakeholder activities. Even then, the EU FAP is one factor among others contributing to the direction of policy discussions, decisions made and measures taken.

The EU FAP activities in order to foster cooperation between forest owners (Key Action 5) are to a large extent beginning in 2009 – assessment of how well policy and decision makers have been reached and influenced is not feasible. A parallel activity, the Confederation of European Forest Owners CEPF study on forest owner cooperation (presented to the SFC in 2009) is an example how the EU FAP can act as a channel between the stakeholders and policy makers. The dialogue between the stakeholders (in this case, the forest owners) and the Member State representatives is a way to ‘send a

message' to the national level of how the competitiveness of forestry could be improved, but it is also a way to investigate where there is potential and need for an EU level action.

The increased dialogue and more participative approaches introduced in implementation of the EU FAP are appreciated both by Member States and the stakeholders. Though the multiple interests invested in the forests, e.g. targets for wood mobilisation, sustainability of wood supply and biodiversity goals, the EU FAP provides a structure and framework to continue the dialogue on multiple interests. The economic, ecologic and social dimensions of sustainable forestry are interlinked, and the EU FAP has consciously raised this issue (see also the Evaluation Question 11).

## **Conclusions**

The EU FAP reaches the key policy-makers and stakeholders to the extent that these are involved in the Standing Forestry Committee (SFC) and the Advisory Group on Forestry and Cork (AGFC) as well as the Inter-Services' Group (ISG) on Forestry within the Commission. The working mode of the SFC ad hoc Working Groups has strengthened dialogue, and the participatory approach can be expected to contribute to a better take-off for the EU FAP outputs. At the stage of the mid-term evaluation, it is difficult to show this influence as specific actions triggered by the EU FAP.

Key actions under Theme 1 address the economic dimension of sustainable forest management and aim at fostering the competitiveness of the sector; Economic viability is a key pillar of sustainable forest management and of crucial importance for maintaining forests and their multiple benefits to society. Improving the long-term competitiveness of the forest sector is therefore a main goal at EU level. Dissemination of the EU FAP outputs (e.g. studies, Working Group reports and recommendations, SFC opinions) to a wider group of actors is not comprehensive, but the good and well-timed outputs are available to those that need them and know where to search for them. To make the leverage of the EU FAP more efficient and effective would require wider dissemination to groups outside the organisations implementing the EU FAP, and the EU FAP outputs should in any case be disseminated to the key policy-makers and stakeholders in parallel sectors e.g. energy, environment and agriculture.

## **Recommendations**

In order to make the EU FAP more known, both within the forest sector and among the key policy-makers and stakeholders in parallel sectors, the awareness of the EU FAP and its outputs should be improved. For example, constant presentations on the FAP and FAP outcomes at seminars, workshops or conferences could provide a means to improve the leverage from the EU FAP to both the practitioners and to the high political level.

In order to support a broader awareness of the EU FAP, the dissemination of the SFC ad hoc Working Group results and the SFC opinions should be improved.

### ***EVALUATION THEME 2 Improving and protecting the environment***

The target of the EU FAP Objective 2 is to improve and protect the environment in order to maintain the productive capacity, resilience and biological diversity of forests. Objective 2 includes altogether four Key Actions: two Key Actions concerning the EU response to the international commitments, and two Key Actions on forest monitoring and protection.

***EQ3: To what extent have the activities of Key Actions 6 and 7 of the Forest Action Plan, i.e. “to contribute to the positive environmental and health effects of forests required by global and international arrangements”, been carried out so far effectively and efficiently?***

The activities in relation to compliance with obligations on climate change mitigation of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol and adaptation to the effects of climate change (Key Action 6) and to contribution towards Community biodiversity objectives (Key Action 7) have been carried out in 2007-2009 in accordance with the EU FAP work programme. The SFC has been debriefed on e.g. UNFCCC and CBD developments and implementation of the EU compliance with Kyoto Protocol and the Community biodiversity objectives. Specific studies have been carried out and also research is supported in FP7. The SFC ad hoc Working Group on Climate Change and Forestry started its work in 2009.

There is no direct link between the EU FAP and the UNFCCC negotiations. The EU FAP work programme foresees exchange of experience between the SFC and the EU sinks expert group (activity 6.2). The sinks expert group is a group under the Council covering the discussions on AFOLU/LULUCF at the meetings of the UNFCCC. No specific facilitation has taken place during 2007-2008, but connection between the representatives of the SFC and the sinks expert group is at the Member State level. The SFC ad hoc Working Group is foreseen to contribute to the Key Action 6 (see Annex 3).

The EU FAP is coordinated by the SFC which was set up by a Council Decision (89/367/EEC) in order to ensure closer and more constant cooperation in the forestry sector between the Member States and the Commission. The SFC plays an active role in facilitating exchanges of experience, sharing information, strengthening cooperation and preparing opinions on specific topics. Legislative initiatives are not prepared in the SFC. Neither does the SFC ad hoc Working Group have a direct channel – other than through its members – to inform the decision making in the EU, e.g. the discussions in the Council on climate change, or the work at the Commission in relation to preparations for the COP15 in Copenhagen in December 2009. The EU FAP provides a platform for information sharing and dialogue. The feedback from the mid-term evaluation surveys shows that there are different expectations for the role the SFC: the Member States would like to see their role in the SFC more as advising the Commission. The same approach is raised also by the stakeholders concerning the role of the AGFC. The Commission emphasises that the preparations e.g. on the climate change negotiations are ongoing in the Council, and the EU FAP is not a channel to influence the discussion.



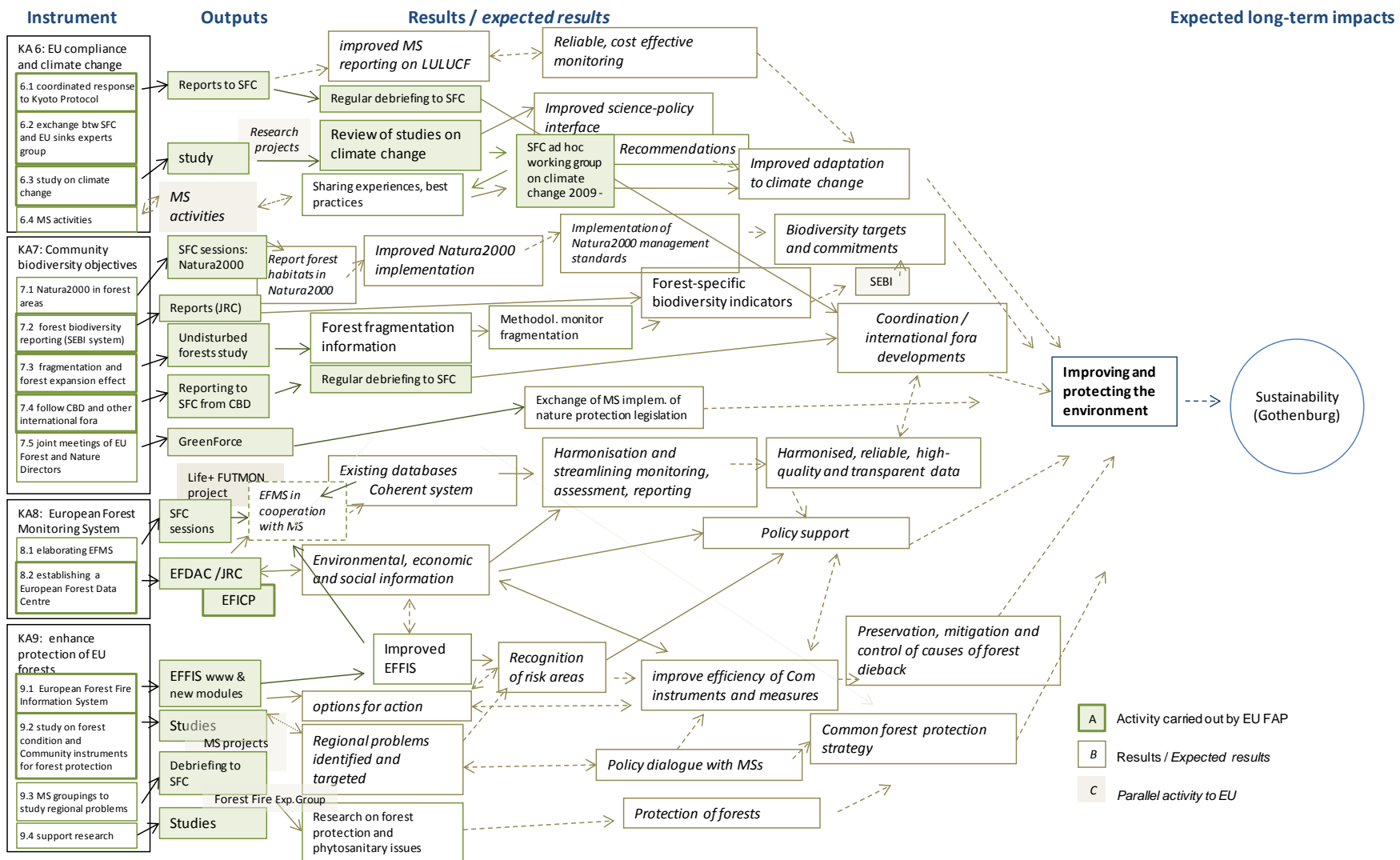


Figure 11. IL model for the Evaluation Theme 2 Improving and protecting the environment (EU FAP Objective 2).

The different expectations become apparent in relation to the SFC ad hoc Working Group on Climate Change and Forestry. One stakeholder – backed-up implicitly by several other stakeholders – mentioned that they would like to see the EU forest sector at the centre of the climate change policy developments, but that until now the EU FAP has not helped to achieve this. How the EU FAP is to contribute to this is to be seen. The major product of the working group will be a report with general recommendations. The Working Group is expected to contribute with a mutual exchange of information, open dialogue and involvement of specific expertise as well as more representative participation of the stakeholders. This, in turn, would help cross-sectoral dialogue and achievement of a broad-based consensus. The Working Group is seen as an important step forward by the stakeholders [6 responses], but also by and the Member States [6 responses] and the representatives of the Commission [2 DG responses].

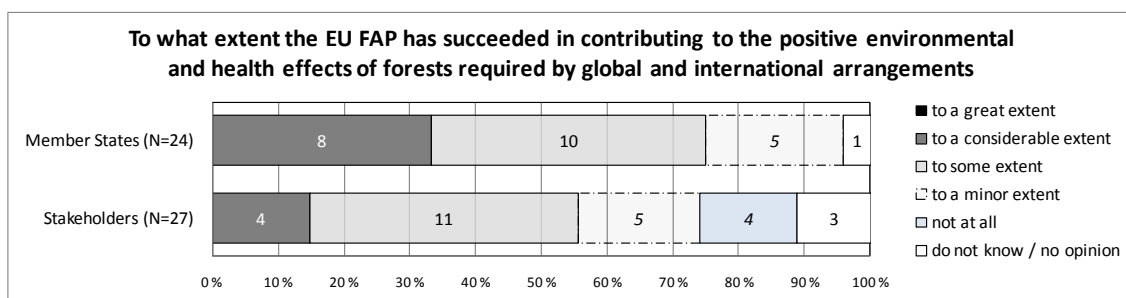
In accordance with the implementation of the Key Action 6, the contribution from EU FAP towards Community biodiversity objectives (Key Action 7) is exchange of information and dialogue between the Commission and Member States. The collection of information through the SFC about Natura 2000 in forest areas was not successful in covering all 27 Member States (in 2009 eleven Member States had provided information on Natura 2000 in forest areas). The contribution of this EU FAP activity to the reporting of biodiversity goals is modest. If there is no comprehensive information available, it remains difficult to conclude a common opinion of the SFC, to make an EU contribution for reporting to the international agreements, or to make proposals to address specific problems in the international fora. At the same time, several Member States indicate in the mid-term evaluation survey that the exchange of experience on Natura 2000 is a good practice realised in the EU FAP, and there is implementation at national level e.g. by utilising the EAFRD funds and forest management plans.

In the mid-term evaluation, the Commission [2 DG responses] and Member States [1 response] explicitly pointed out that sharing of experiences in the SFC / EU FAP is important e.g. because the newer Member States can get a better understanding of the EU legal framework and of issues of global and European importance. It was also acknowledged that the EU Member States can have a bigger influence on forest-related international negotiations as a group with responses coordinated through the EU, rather than by responses from individual Member States. This refers to the EU representation in the CBD and UNFF and UNFCCC. As already pointed out with respect to the climate change negotiations, the EU presentation and positions are prepared in the Council. These preparations are not part of the EU FAP, but information channelling would take place within and between ministries at national level, and within and between the Commission departments.

The EU FAP has had an impact on the formulation of FP7 calls for proposals on forest-related issues, including the themes of Objective 2. Activities in COST are not followed-up within the EU FAP, but there are several actions and initiatives ongoing on the themes with regard to enhancing and protecting the environment. Several studies, projects, research programmes, awareness raising and information campaigns are also carried out in national and sub-national (and regional) consortiums. The Working Group on climate change can be used for sharing information on and utilising the outputs from these parallel activities to the EU FAP. The Member States [2 responses] and

stakeholders [1 response] specifically highlight research projects and studies focused on climate change as a good practice in Objective 2.

When asked how successful the EU FAP has been in contributing to the positive environmental and health effects of forests required by global and international arrangements, Member States tend to be more positive than stakeholders in their assessments (see Figure 12).



**Figure 12. Member State and stakeholder assessments on the success of the EU FAP Key Actions 6 and 7.**

Most Member States considered that the EU FAP has succeeded between “some extent” and a “considerable extent” in contributing to the positive environmental and health effects of forests required by global and international arrangements. Many stakeholder organisations stated that it was difficult to assess to what extent the EU FAP results can drive changes in practice and that there was little to no effect of the EU FAP on the *ground (or in the forest)* on the issues concerned. Stakeholders also criticised the mode of operation, and more specifically they stated that a higher impact could have been achieved if the respective stakeholders would have been informed or involved in the discussions actively rather than just as recipients for the information.

## Conclusions

Activities enhancing and protecting the environment include information sharing in relation to international commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol and the contribution to biodiversity goals as well as development of the forest monitoring in the EU. Activities have been carried out in accordance with the EU FAP work programme.

So far the EU FAP has provided a platform for information sharing and dialogue to reach the SFC representatives of the Member States and the AGFC representatives of the stakeholders, but it is not directly a part of the EU decision-making processes. The information sharing can be expected to have an indirect impact on the positive environmental and health effects of forests required by global and international arrangements. This can be done by e.g.: increased awareness of different viewpoints regarding the forest-sector issues; increased understanding of different demands on forests; better understanding of the EU obligations and their impact by sharing experiences between the Member States on implementation of these obligations at the national level. Without better coverage of information on activities carried out in the

Member States, the EU FAP does not effectively support the EU contribution to the forest-related international processes, including reporting of the EU compliance with the international commitments.

The issue of climate change has gained importance in policy discussions since the adoption of the EU FAP Key Actions and activities in 2006. This is visible in the implementation of the EU FAP as discussions carried out in 2007-2008 and as establishment of the SFC ad hoc Working Group on Climate Change and Forestry in 2008/2009. Although the work is just starting in 2009, the ad hoc Working Group is seen an effective way towards dialogue and consensus-building among different stakeholder groups. Currently the work programme of the SFC does not make explicitly the linkage between the EU FAP and discussions in the Council, where the forest related topics are handled in the Working Party on Forestry, but also in several other working parties and expert groups (e.g. relating to climate change, biodiversity, energy, development). Effectiveness of the EU FAP with regard to enhancing and protecting the environment could be improved, with a stronger link from the EU FAP to deliberations at EU and national levels.

## **Recommendations**

Effectiveness and efficiency of EU FAP Key Actions 6 and 7 could be improved with more dialogue and participative approaches – this is already expected to happen with the involvement of stakeholders and experts designated by Member States in the ad hoc Working Group on Climate Change and Forestry.

The approach of broad consultations as in the ad hoc Working Group on Climate Change and Forestry is recommended to be continued also during the second implementation period of the EU FAP. The results from studies and the SFC ad hoc Working Groups should be disseminated more effectively – the experience gained in other SFC ad hoc Working Groups (ref. EU FAP Objective 1 Key Actions 3 and 4) should be utilised to explore how this link from the EU FAP to the policy formulation and decision making at the EU and national levels could be strengthened.

In order to make the implementation of the remaining EU FAP period effective and efficient, the SFC should discuss how to improve sharing of information on activities carried out in the Member States. Stronger link from the EU FAP to the deliberations at EU and national levels should be aimed at e.g. by linking the National Forest Programmes (NFPs) and the EU FAP more closely together. Sharing of information on implementation in the Member States should be improved by a more structured reporting to the SFC. In the mid-term evaluation surveys new and emerging issues were brought up, including topics in the field of environment (the list of topics is in Annex 5 of this report). Member States and Commission should discuss in the SFC the list of new and emerging issues, and as appropriate check and focus the remaining activities in the Key Actions 6 and 7 and adjust the Work Programme for 2009-2011 as appropriate.

The SFC should consider of establishment of an ad hoc Working Group on target setting for sustainable forest management and forest protection. The conflicting

demands on forest from climate change, biodiversity and particularly renewable energy have increased since the EU FAP was adopted in 2006. An additional key target of the EU FAP in the remaining implementation period (2010-2011) could be to contribute to more operational sustainability criteria for forestry, in particular for biomass but acknowledging multiple services and benefits from forests (see also the EU FAP Objective 1).

***EQ4: To what extent have the activities of key actions 8 and 9 of the Forest Action Plan to contribute to forest monitoring and forest protection, been carried out so far effectively and efficiently?***

Activities carried out in 2007-2009 under the Key Actions 8 and 9 are in accordance with the EU FAP work programme. The development of a European forest monitoring system should advance harmonisation of the monitoring, assessment and reporting of forest information in the EU. However, an EU forest monitoring system has not been developed as anticipated. This is mentioned by several Member States [4 responses] as a shortcoming compared to the expectations raised when preparing the EU FAP, which coincided with the expiration of the Forest Focus regulation in 2006. A Life+ project (FutMon) was launched in 2009, but a project-based approach is not seen by the Commission as a solution for achieving continuity and harmonisation of forest monitoring in the EU, but the contribution from the project to the further elaboration of a monitoring system in the EU can be seen as an indirect effect, at best.

As the collection and provision of data to the monitoring systems is the responsibility of the Member States, the Commission has only limited possibilities of action. Member States are not obliged to collect and provide data, but several Member States have committed to contributing to EFDAC and EFFIS.

The primary objective of establishing EFDAC is to reduce the heterogeneity of the various national and international data sources. The development of reliable and easily accessible forest information systems is a challenge, but the development is regarded as crucial for improving coordination of forest data at the international level. In terms of data management, including data storage, exchange and access, the EU has a comprehensive set of information systems and databases in place (e.g. EFFIS, EUROSTAT Forestry Database and EFDAC) which will be coordinated by the Commission in environmental data centres. The Commission is working together with EEA in this area for a better use of available datasets.

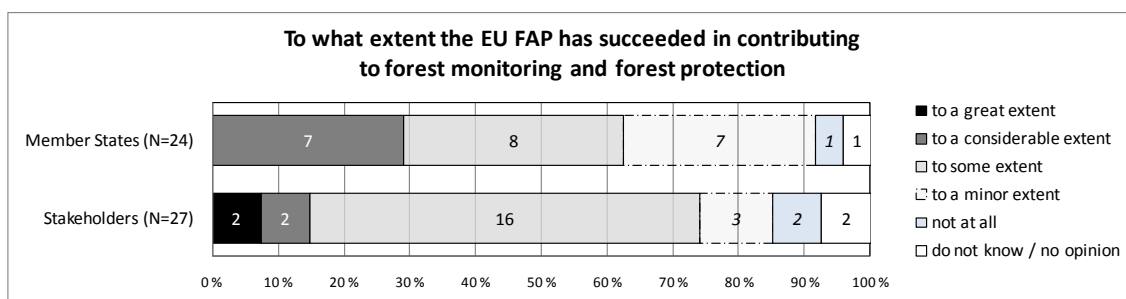
In the mid-term evaluation surveys the development of the EFDAC is specifically mentioned as an example of good practices by the Member States [3 responses] and a stakeholder [1 response]. There are also high expectations for the system. Although the establishment of the prototype has performed well, regular policy mechanisms for financing are still missing. These are regarded as essential to guarantee a proper development of the system and coordination of forest information at the EU level.

The internet-based EFFIS information system is a well functioning instrument and is specifically mentioned in the mid-term evaluation surveys by Commission and the Member States as an example of a good practice within EU FAP, and a useful contribution to the objective of working towards a European Forest Monitoring System (EFMS). Compared to the monitoring, assessment and reporting of forest fire and air pollutants effects, the monitoring of forest damages caused by storms, insects and diseases, damages by wildlife and livestock is less developed and harmonised.

The future steps in the development of EFMS – e.g. concerning a Community instrument establishing funding mechanism for forest information, including monitoring – require reaching a decision among the EU Member States. The Commission White Paper on Adaptation to Climate Change (COM(2009)147) is proposing to start a debate on forest protection and forest monitoring. Additional reporting and accounting obligations are expected from the post-2012 Climate Agreement that is currently being negotiated. Further reporting needs relate also to CBD and Community biodiversity commitments.

Studies, e.g. the study on combating forest dieback are seen as an important contribution to the EU FAP implementation. Further studies are ongoing and the topic will be elaborated further. The FP6 and FP7 research programmes are recognised as contributing to (developing a better understanding and a scientific basis for) forest protection. As already pointed out in the analysis of other Key Actions, these activities are also carried out e.g. in the COST cooperation parallel to the EU FAP.

According to the Commission the forest fire expert group is an example of groupings of Member States working together to handle regional problems. The mid-term evaluation survey indicated that other regional groupings also take place – some of them as cooperation between countries, and some of them more as sub-national (incl. also cross-border) projects. The EU FAP work programme does not envisage information sharing on such groups e.g. on how they are established, for which purpose and with which results.



**Figure 13. Member State and stakeholder assessments on the success of the EU FAP Key Actions 8 and 9.**

Member States tended to be more critical than the stakeholders when asked how successful the EU FAP has been in contributing to forest monitoring and protection. Stakeholders acknowledge that there has been a lot of talk about the monitoring in 2007-2008, and thus something must be happening in this respect. In the mid-term

evaluation feedback, stakeholders raised the issue of what kind of monitoring data is needed: monitoring should respond not only on the ecological and environmental protection needs, but also to policy and decision making on the economic and social aspects of the forest-based sector as a whole.

Not directly a part of the Key Action 9, but closely related to it has been the discussion on the development of a common European Forest Fire Strategy which was proposed during the French Presidency and in several conferences and workshops. The importance of the forest fire issue has been pointed out also by the stakeholders both at national and EU levels. But rather than being a monitoring issue, this refers to building awareness that forest fires are not a problem for an individual country, but an issue at the level of the EU and measures to prevent the forest fires, compensate and recover the damage, build up insurance systems, etc., should be discussed at the EU level. The Forest Fire Strategy has been elaborated by the Commission, Member States and Stakeholders, but this action is not reported in the EU FAP progress reports – thus it gives the impression that the Forest Fire Strategy is considered as a parallel activity to the EU FAP.

## **Conclusions**

Forest monitoring is an integral part of enhancing and protecting the environment. A fully operational European forest monitoring system is highly desired by various information providers and users and it is regarded as essential for effective and efficient policy-making at EU level. Since the Forest Focus Regulation expired in 2006, there have been no financial means for ensuring sustained maintenance of forest monitoring given that the LIFE+ financial instrument operates on a project basis. Although the European Forest Data Centre, EFDAC, and the European Forest Fires Information System, EFFIS, developed further during the EU FAP, are considered as good tools, the impact of the EU FAP on elaboration of a European forest monitoring system is modest. The EU FAP has had an indirect effect on the deliberations and policy formulation on forest monitoring and forest protection in the EU. The EU FAP has provided a platform to discuss the issue among the Member States, but the deliberations did not lead to a common position on how to proceed. The Commission White Paper on Adapting to Climate Change: Towards a European Framework for Action (COM (2009) 147) proposes to open a debate at the EU level on forest protection and forest information systems, including the issues such as monitoring, climate factors, biodiversity and the protective functions of EU forests. The EU FAP can support this process.

## **Recommendations**

Although the EU FAP is not directly a part of the EU decision making, it can promote the work already done towards a European forest monitoring system, and it can utilise the SFC and AGFC to debate on forest protection and forest information.

The Commission and the Member States should address the long-term financing of a European forest monitoring system. The lack of stable and dedicated funding source jeopardises the steady collection of harmonised forest data.

The Council Working Party on Forestry should initiate discussions on the development of concrete policy instruments in support of the collection of harmonised forest data, taking account also of the developments in connection with the INSPIRE directive, the (proposal for a) GMES regulation, and the Shared Environment Information System (SEIS) developments. The SFC should be informed about the outcomes of the conference organised by the Swedish Presidency on the topic of “Future forest monitoring in the European Union” (11-12 November 2009).

The SFC should discuss what the means are to contribute to the debate on forest protection and monitoring. Such measures could include:

- a study to gain insight into the expectations of the Member States and stakeholders (in a wider sense than AGFC) towards SEIS and in particular the European Forest Data Centre (EFDAC) as a node of SEIS.
- establishment of a network of organisations that are expected to provide and/or use data for both the EFDAC and the European Forest Information and Communication Platform (EFICP).

The Commission and Member States should call for and support studies on forest rehabilitation of forest areas affected by forest fires. A regional approach and collaborative partnerships should be promoted with regard to issues such as forest fires, floods and drought [ref. also to the Key Action 11 under the EU FAP Objective 3].

The Council Working Party on Forestry should initiate work towards the development of specific policy options for enhancing the protection of forests in the EU. A coherent and integrated approach to sustainable management of European forests ought to target the protection of their social, productive and ecological capacity intrinsically. The Member States should also consider more ambitious policy options towards a more integrated policy for collecting forest information. A more intensive consultation and discussion process on forest information systems and forest protection post-2011 should be started without delay.



### ***EVALUATION THEME 3 Contribution to quality of life***

The target of the EU FAP Objective 3 is to contribute to quality of life by preserving and improving the social and cultural dimensions of forests. Objective 3 includes three Key Actions: (1) encouraging of environmental education; (2) maintaining and enhancing of protective functions of forests; and (3) exploring the potential of urban and peri-urban forests.

***EQ5: To what extent have the activities of key actions 10-12 of the Forest Action Plan carried out so far contributed to the quality of life in all its relevant dimensions, such as the social and cultural dimension?***

The contribution of forests to quality of life has been widely recognised and considered important in recent years. The topic was raised as one of the EU FAP Objectives. The Commission annual progress report (July 2009 ref. AGFC meeting) does not report any activities in relation to EU FAP Objective 3. Objectives 1 and 2 of EU FAP have been prioritised during 2007-2008, and thus Objective 3 activities (Key Actions 10-12) are scheduled for the next stage from 2009 onwards. Assessing the contribution of the EU FAP activities carried out so far is not possible as the Evaluation Question is formulated. In this respect, the IL model (see Figure 14) is not directly useful for the analysis.

Though not mentioned in the progress report, two meetings encouraging environmental education and information (Key Action 10) were organised by Austria in 2007-2008. The meetings aimed at exchanging views within SFC and AGFC, and stressed the cooperation between the Member States and the Forest Communicators' Network.

In addition to the Key Action 10, there are two EU FAP activities related to information and education i.e. Key Action 5 on forest owners and environmental education in Objective 1, and Key Action 18 on communication in Objective 4. The mid-term evaluation shows that several national and transnational initiatives have been launched, and also the EU Leonardo da Vinci education programme has been utilised for financing these activities. Some activities take place at sub-national level, though international cooperation contributes to improving e.g. forestry training, environmental education and forest pedagogy in Europe.

There are ongoing activities in relation to maintaining and enhancing the protective function of forests (Key Action 11), but at the stage of the mid-term evaluation no activities have been carried out within the framework of EU FAP. In parallel to the planned studies on forest-related natural disasters, there have been a number of FP7 research calls addressing these issues in 2007-2009. Thematically the Key Action 11 does not include forest fires (which are part of Key Action 9). At the Member State level, some specific studies and activities are mentioned on forest-related disasters. Furthermore, specific measures from EAFRD have been activated by some countries to promote protection against natural disasters. Also transnational projects on protective forests, natural hazard prevention, etc. have been implemented with ERDF resources in the INTERREG programmes 2000-2006 and 2007-2013 (transnational cooperation).

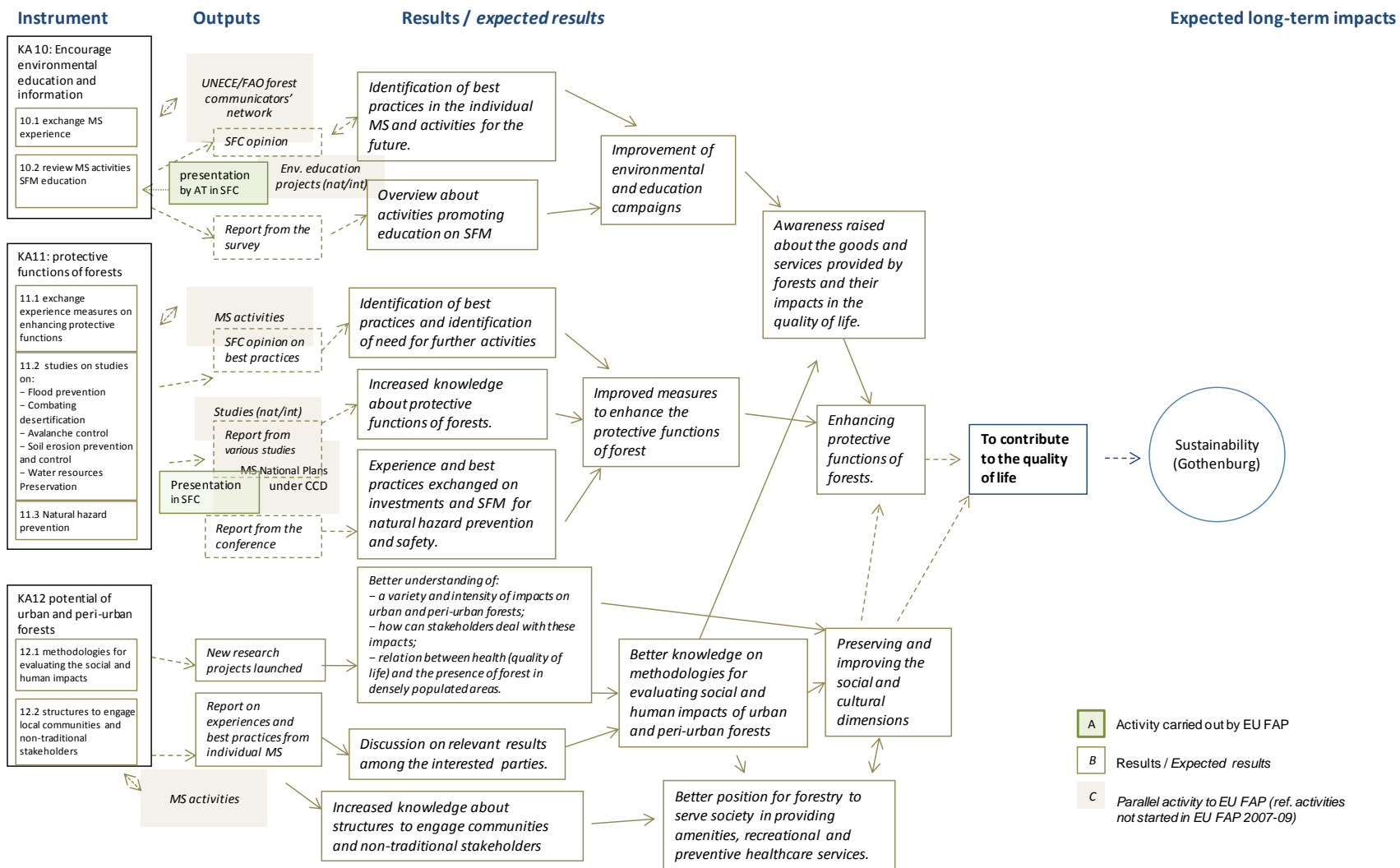
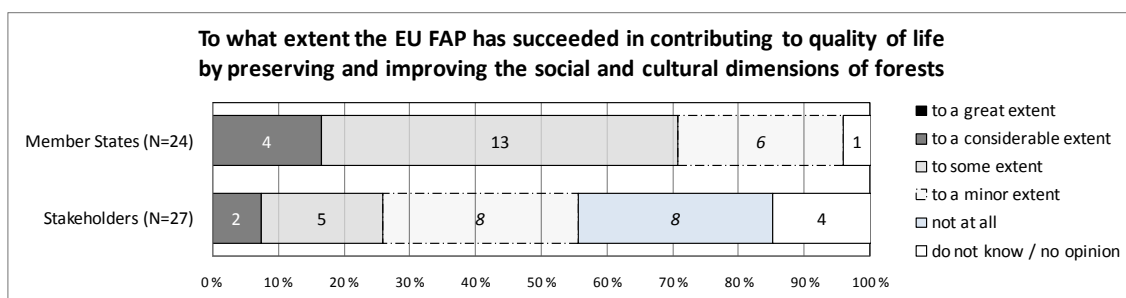


Figure 14. IL model for the Evaluation Theme 3 Contributing to quality of life (EU FAP Objective 3).

Relating to urban and peri-urban forests (Key Action 12) there are activities ongoing parallel to the EU FAP. A linked initiative in this field is the European Forum on Urban Forestry (EFUF), an annual forum where urban forestry professionals meet scientists and policy-makers (latest meeting in May 2009). Furthermore the Objective 3 theme has been handled in COST<sup>46</sup> actions, though many of them prior to the EU FAP implementation. At the Member State level there are a number of parallel activities (independent from the EU FAP) that have been implemented, most of them very recently.

In the mid-term evaluation survey, Member States report active implementation of the Objective 3 related activities at national and sub-national levels. Although most activities have been ongoing and have taken place without linkage to the EU FAP, the Action Plan is perceived and used by some Member States as a catalyst and motivation. The long tradition in education and information activities reported by the countries makes evident that there is potential for added value from the EU FAP: it can provide a platform to exchange information as a way to benchmark and disseminate good ideas. Some of the activities reported by the Member States are conducted at regional and local levels. The instruments which are primarily used by Member States to implement Objective 3 actions are the rural development funds (EAFRD), structural funds (e.g. ERDF) and the education programmes, meaning that a significant part of these actions is taken at regional level.



**Figure 15. Member State and stakeholder assessments on the success of the EU FAP Objective 3.**

The EU FAP contribution to preserving and improving the social and cultural dimensions of forests is assessed as very modest by the stakeholders (especially by the representatives of producers, industry and environmental NGOs). Even though the EU FAP activities have not started, the Member States assess that there has been a positive impact from raising the theme on the EU FAP agenda. Feedback collected in the mid-term evaluation surveys shows that the social and cultural aspects are seen as an important part of forestry. The feedback from the Commission shows that although the contribution of forests to the quality of life is considered an important issue, there are difficulties in defining operative objectives and activities. The Key Actions defined under this Objective are important for a specific set of countries – or regions – but not necessarily seen as important for all of the EU27 Member States.

<sup>46</sup> COST E-12 "Urban Forests and Trees" (1997-2000), COST E-39 "Forests, Trees and Human Health and Wellbeing" (2003-2007) and COST E-33 "Forest for Recreation and Nature Tourism" (2003-2008).

## **Conclusions**

The importance of the EU FAP Objective 3 Contribution to Quality of Life is recognised in the feedback collected by the mid-term evaluation surveys. Nevertheless very few activities were planned for the first implementation period 2007-2009, and it is too early to assess whether and how the EU FAP has had an effect on the goal of contributing to preserving and improving the social and cultural dimensions of forests.

In the mid-term evaluation, the Member States report national activities and programmes with the aims of: enforcing environmental education; enhancing the protective functions of forests; the potential of urban/peri-urban forests. These activities are also reflected in the rural development programmes of the Member States, which provide a link with the EU FAP Objective 3. The UNECE/FAO Forest Communicators' Network (FCN) is active in forest pedagogics and in forest communication in Europe, and it has defined support for the EU FAP goals as one of its tasks – nevertheless, the role and functions of the FCN is not defined in the EU FAP work programme.

The fact that the EU FAP Objective 3 activities are starting at EU level in 2009, gives Member States and the Commission the possibility to check the focus of the Objective 3, the activities to be carried out in 2009-2011, and also the role that the Forest Communicators' Network could play in the implementation of the EU FAP. Many activities related to the EU FAP Objective 3 in the Member States are carried out at sub-national level and sharing of information on how each country has mobilised specific funding instruments (e.g. rural development programmes EAFRD, regional development programmes ERDF and the education and training programmes) could also be a valuable and constructive output to increase effectiveness of the EU FAP in contributing to the quality of life. Such an exchange of information could be based on the analysis of forestry measures in the Rural Development Programmes 2007-2013 that the Commission has elaborated in 2008.

## **Recommendations**

As already indicated in the SFC annual Work Programme, the SFC should discuss how the Objective 3 will be implemented when the Objective 3 activities start in 2009. In order to emphasise the three sustainability dimensions and the multifunctional role of forests it is important to implement also the EU FAP Objective 3 Key Actions, and produce concrete outputs illustrating how forests contribute to quality of life (see Evaluation Question 11).

The Commission and the SFC could utilise the study on public perceptions (Key Action 18) and a consultation of the stakeholders in the AGFC to check and, if needed, prioritise the Key Actions of the Objective 3 for the remaining implementation period 2009-2011.

An information exchange could be organised within the SFC regarding the specific funding instruments which the Member States have mobilised to support the EU FAP in general and the Objective 3 in particular.

***EVALUATION THEME 4 Improving forest sector co-ordination, coherence and communication***

The target of the EU FAP Objective 4 is to improve coherence and cross-sectoral cooperation in order to balance economic, environmental and socio-cultural objectives at multiple organisational and institutional levels. The five Key Actions under this objective address the coordination with the Member States and among policy areas, as well as communication e.g. with the stakeholders and the public.

The Objective 4 is divided into two Evaluation Themes: (1) Key Actions 13 and 14 i.e. SFC and coordination and coherence within Commission; and (2) Key Actions 15-18. Following the same logic, the Intervention logic models are described separately for the Evaluation Theme 4 and Evaluation Theme 5.

***EQ6: To what extent have the activities of key action 13 of the Forest Action Plan carried out so far, been effective and efficient in strengthening the role of the Standing Forestry Committee, and has this been beneficial for the coordination and communication between Community actions and the forest policies of the Member States?***

Activities in relation to strengthening of the role of the SFC (Key Action 13) have been carried out as planned in the Work Programme. This can be seen as efficient implementation of the plan: annual work programmes of the SFC have been compiled right from the start of the EU FAP, i.e. from 2007 onwards, and they are structuring the work and meetings of the SFC. There have been two parallel SFC ad hoc Working Groups at a time mobilising expertise to key topics (non-wood forest goods and services and wood mobilisation for energy generation in 2007-2008; climate change and public procurement in 2009-2010). The SFC has concluded its opinions based on consensus reached between the Member States. EU Forest Directors meetings have been arranged regularly in 2007-2009 through the EU presidencies.

The annual work programmes of SFC are seen as very valuable by the Commission [3 DG responses] and Member States [1 response]. The yearly work programmes are discussed in the ISG as well as in the SFC, and they structure the work of the SFC, but also provide the Commission with information on the annual agenda. The detailed EU FAP Work Programme 2007-2011 has been followed and there has been a need for regular meetings. The multiannual work programme schedules to a large extent also the SFC annual programmes. This agenda setting makes the work efficient, but it also means that there are many meetings, long agendas, a short time for advance preparations of the discussions, and not much room for adding topics to the meeting agendas or for allowing more extensive discussions for some topics in the SFC.

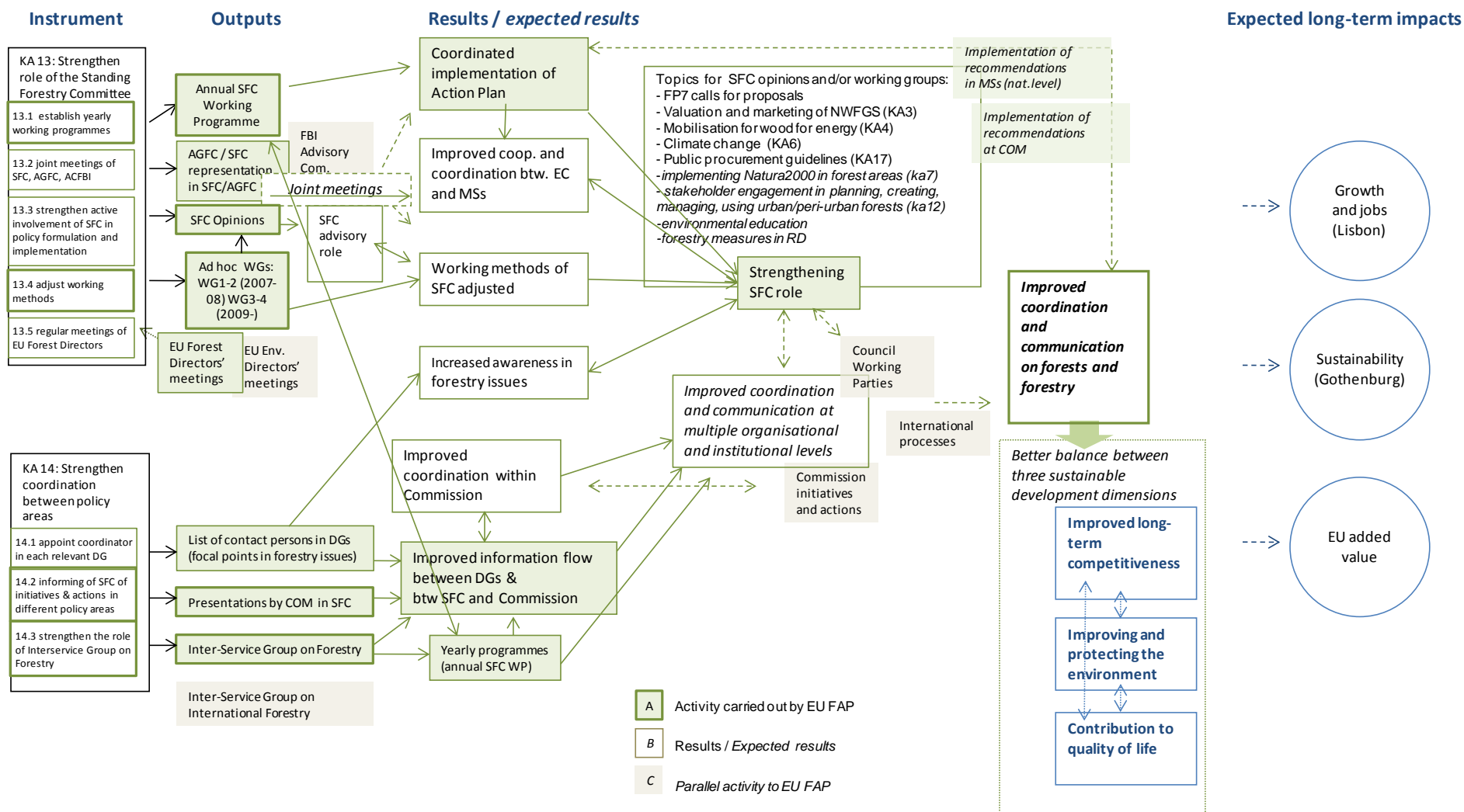


Figure 16. IL model for the Evaluation Theme 4 Improving forest sector co-ordination, coherence and communication (Key Actions 13 and 14).

There is a high rate of participation in the meetings. Several Member States indicate that SFC meetings are a way to ensure better communication and transparency of initiatives in different policy areas regarding forests [direct quotation of 3 responses, but implicit in several Member State responses]. Furthermore, a number of specific benefits from the SFC and its work methods are mentioned: stronger cooperation and coordination between Member States e.g. in international processes; understanding of different Member States' problems; awareness of the importance of cross-sectoral coordination; useful information and knowledge sharing; opinions as an opportunity to affect EU policies, e.g. rural development. The Commission emphasises that the SFC has played a crucial role in reaching consensus and common opinion e.g. on wood mobilisation. The SFC has also been a platform for sharing experiences between the 'older' and 'more recent' Member States i.e. the SFC has assisted in translating the EU legislation and requirements into practice. From the stakeholders' perspective the SFC remains a more distant cooperation body.

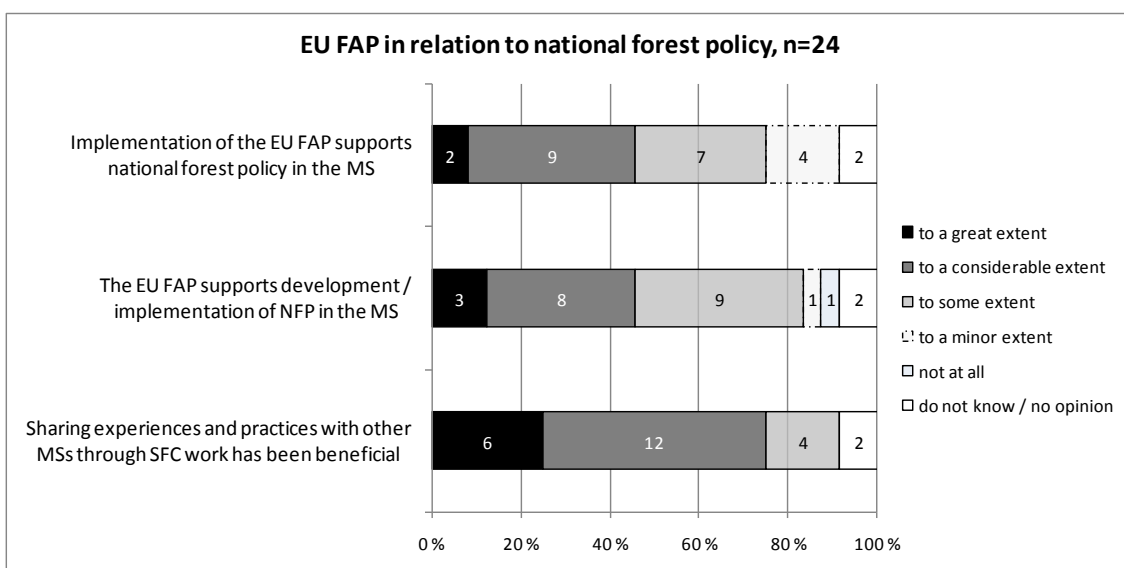
Joint meetings of the members of the SFC, AGFC and/or AC-FBI have not been arranged. In the mid-term evaluation interviews it was indicated by the Commission that joint meetings would be impractical and a not very efficient way to create an open dialogue because of the high number of participants (the SFC and AGFC meetings together have nearly 100 participants). Instead, communication between the groups is ensured through the AGFC chairpersons' participation in the SFC meetings. The decisions of the SFC (i.e. summary records from the meetings) are published in the forestry website, but the records do not include further information on the discussions in the SFC. Stakeholders [2 responses] point out that it would be beneficial to share experiences between Member States and the stakeholders, e.g. on participation of forest owners, operators, NGOs and civil society in the national forest policy. In the mid-term evaluation inventory of activities, several Member States refer to stakeholder involvement in the NFP and national forums. This is however, not a common practice across all Member States, but the participation processes differ from country to country. The EU FAP could provide a platform for this kind of information and experience sharing between the countries.

As already described in the Evaluation Theme 1 (Key Actions 3 and 4) and in Evaluation Theme 3 (Key Action 6), the SFC ad hoc Working Groups are assessed as a very efficient and effective mode of work by the Commission [5 DG responses], Member States [6 responses] and stakeholders [9 responses]. The ad hoc Working Groups are a flexible instrument that can be used for in-depth work on important issues. At the Commission however, there are limited resources for running the Working Groups, and it is not feasible to administer more than two Working Groups in parallel. The two Working Groups carried out so far in 2007-2008 produced reports with common conclusions and recommendations of the Member State and stakeholder representatives with one exception – a separate statement was issued by an environmental NGO on the report of the Working Group on Wood Mobilisation. On the basis of the Working Group results explicit SFC opinions have been formulated at the beginning of 2009 (see Evaluation Question 1). At the mid-term evaluation, it is too early to perceive what impact, where and how the opinions contribute to the EU and Member States policy and decision making. However, the example of SFC opinion on

FP7 shows that there can be a direct influence (i.e. to calls for proposals opened in the FP7 programme by the Commission).

In addition to the meetings of ISG, SFC and AGFC, the EU FAP work programme does not foresee a mechanism for how the SFC opinions are disseminated e.g. from the participants in the ISG on forestry to other officials within the Commission, or from the SFC to the national level, to relevant ministries and e.g. the Council Working Party / expert group members. The SFC opinions are not published (as of August 2009), and they are not accessible in the forestry website where the Working Group reports are available.

In the mid-term evaluation survey, Member State responses to the question about the contribution from the EU FAP to national forest policy / NFP vary from one country to another – from low influence to a considerable influence (see section 2.2.4). The respondents to the mid-term evaluation inventory remark that it is difficult to point out activities that the EU FAP has specifically contributed to or triggered at Member State level. A high share of respondents consider the work in the SFC as very beneficial in sharing experiences and practices between the Member States (75% of the respondents indicate either “to a great extent” or “to a considerable extent”, see Figure 17). Member States also give examples of topics and themes that have increased in importance at the national level due to discussions in EU FAP: e.g. green procurement / public procurement, renewable energy and wood biomass and targets for forestry, Natura2000 and investment in research.

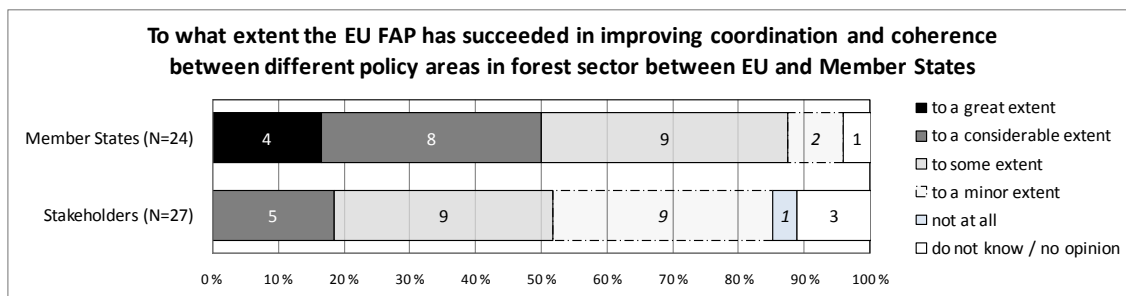


**Figure 17. Member State perceptions on the EU FAP in relation to their national forest policy / national forest programme (NFP), and on the Standing Forestry Committee’s work on sharing experiences and practices between the Member States.**

A general remark is that although the Member States assess the SFC work very positively, the role of the SFC could still be strengthened and the SFC utilised more in advising the Commission in forest-related issues – i.e. the discussions in the SFC would be more useful at the stage when the Commission is preparing initiatives than at the



stage of informing the Member States about the outcome. As already pointed out in other evaluation themes, these discussions and preparations do not only take place at the Commission, but also, for example, in the respective Council working parties and expert groups. The timing of the discussions in the SFC and its working groups is important in order to make an effective contribution to the preparations ongoing in different levels.



**Figure 18. Member State and stakeholder assessment on the success of the EU FAP in improving coordination and coherence between different policy areas in forest sector between EU and Member States.**

The strengthening role of the SFC was approached in the mid-term evaluation by a question concerning how the EU FAP has contributed to better coordination and coherence between different policy areas in the forest sector between the EU and Member States. Member States assess the approach as considerably more successful than stakeholders (see Figure 18). In the mid-term evaluation surveys, some stakeholders (especially producers and environmental NGOs) are critical in their assessments: there are no practical implications visible at national (and sub-national) level concerning how the EU FAP has contributed to national policy, decisions and measures taken. Neither is there a direct dialogue between the Member States and the stakeholders at the EU level. Activities carried out at national level are national, i.e. they are not promoted as activities in support of the EU FAP, even though they are aiming at the same goals as the EU FAP. Although the expected indirect effect to EU and national policy making is already repeated in the analysis of the EU FAP Objectives 1-3, it cannot be expected that the EU FAP strongly impacts on national forest policies. The Member States see the EU FAP and the SFC as more important for exchanging views with other Member States, rather than its role in supporting the implementation of NFPs or supporting national level policy-making.

## Conclusions

The EU FAP has been efficient in organising and structuring the work of the SFC, e.g. by proposing themes and topics in a multi-annual work programme, a clear timetable and regular meetings in annual work programme, calling in expertise by forming working groups and contributing to policy formulation by opinions. The effect on policy formulation is indirect. The SFC opinions are not available publicly and it is not explicitly defined in the EU FAP the structures and mechanisms how the SFC opinions are supposed to contribute to national policy deliberations or to the initiatives and actions in the Commission. However, based on the feedback collected in the mid-term evaluation, it can be expected that there is an impact on policy processes both at EU and national levels. The SFC has been – although to a limited extent – beneficial for the co-

ordination and communication between Community actions and the forest policies of the Member States. Showing concrete actions which are triggered in the Member States or as Community actions would require more than the two years of EU FAP implementation at the stage of the mid-term evaluation.

A number of countries indicate that they have utilised the EU FAP in developing their NFPs – e.g. to check the national agenda and priorities. In order to improve effectiveness, it would be important to make the connection between the NFPs and the EU FAP more visible, and share experience of NFP (or equivalent) between the Member States. Stakeholders emphasise the need for information sharing between the Member States and the stakeholders – e.g. on participatory processes in NFPs in the EU. For practical reasons, by 2009 joint meetings of the members of the SFC and AGFC and with the AC-FBI have not been arranged although this activity was planned in the EU FAP work programme. However, the Chairman of the AGFC has regularly participated in the SFC meetings.

Effective implementation of the EU FAP requires strengthening the role of the SFC at three levels:

- Strengthening the role of SFC as contributing to the EU policy formulations in the Council;
- Strengthening the advisory role of the SFC in preparing actions and initiatives in the Commission;
- Strengthening the role of SFC as contributing to national forest policies across the EU.

## **Recommendations**

Member States should discuss together with the Commission (starting from the SFC in consultation with AGFC) how the role of SFC can be further improved and the coordination and communication between the Community actions and the forest policies in the Member States further elaborated. The following measures are proposed for consideration for the remaining EU FAP period in 2009-2011:

- continuing with the annual work programmes of the SFC, the SFC opinions, the SFC ad hoc working groups and the studies conducted on the EU FAP issues.
- more active involvement of the Member States in the process of establishing the annual work programmes of the SFC.
- more structured reporting of Member State activities to SFC. The mid-term evaluation inventory of activities already provides a basis for state-of-the-play information, but there should be a more structured way to collect information on the Member States activities in relation to the EU FAP goals.
- means for following up and making visible how the EU FAP outputs (studies, reports, recommendations and SFC opinions) are utilised in the EU institutions and in the Member States. The means for follow-up could be e.g. a specific SFC meeting, thematic follow-up meeting or other event with involvement of different levels of administration and the stakeholders.
- Joint meetings between SFC, AC-FBI and AGFC on an ad hoc basis addressing emerging key issues concerning sharing information and experience across the EU

- and/or to follow-up the EU FAP outputs already produced. These events could also be arranged e.g. linked with the EU forest directors/nature directors meetings.
- In order to support a broader awareness of the SFC opinions, the Commission should make the SFC opinions publicly available e.g. at the Commission forestry web-site.

Discussion about the follow-up of the EU FAP after 2011 – and the implementation of the EU Forestry Strategy – should be started, and the SFC could play an active role in initiating the discussion. As a contribution to the post-2011 discussion, the Member States and the Commission should investigate the open method of coordination (OMC) to NFPs/national forest policies and other options for governance in order to achieve improved coordination and coherence in forest policy in the EU (this is the Key Action 15 which has not yet been started in the EU FAP).

***EQ7: To what extent have the activities of key action 14 of the Forest Action Plan carried out so far, been effective and efficient in improving the coherence between different Community actions? Have EU level forest groups and the Inter-service Group on Forestry contributed to improving coherence?***

The Inter-services' Group on Forestry (established in 2001) has been actively involved in the EU FAP implementation and has had regular meetings in 2006-2009. It is the main body to strengthen the coordination of forest-related issues within the Commission. The ISG is chaired by DG Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) and it includes representatives of 16 Commission departments (DGs). Active participation in the ISG meetings as well as in direct smaller meetings between the Commission representatives contribute to the EU FAP implementation. The ISG and their meetings are broadly seen by the interviewed Commission representatives as highly important and useful for the coordination of forest-related matters – in addition to the formal inter-service consultation which is part of adopting any legislative procedure by the Commission.

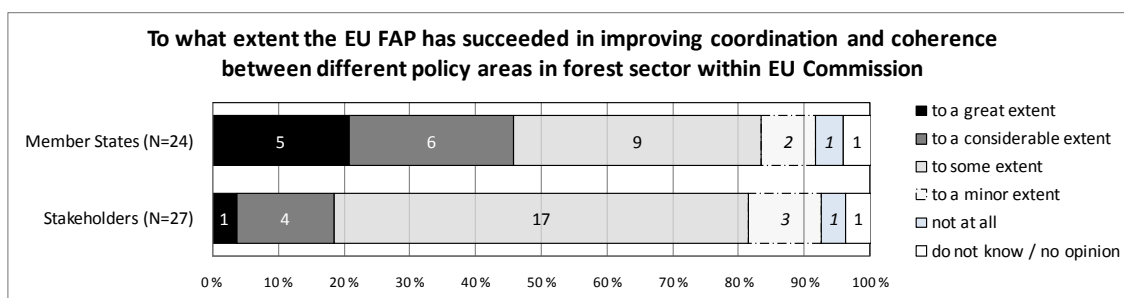
The main value of the ISG meetings is, according to the interviews, the early information on planned or ongoing activities in the Commission services and the good information before and in relation to the formal inter-service consultations. The working atmosphere in the ISG is described as very open and constructive. The EU FAP has contributed to the role of the ISG, e.g. through the preparation of the annual SFC work programme which provides an annual agenda for discussions in ISG on Forestry.

Regular ISG meetings contribute to the fact that the SFC is regularly informed on ongoing activities in the various Commission services – also this connection is assessed by the Commission as valuable and working well. The assessment is confirmed by Member States [3 responses] and stakeholders [3 responses]: the information sharing by Commission to SFC and AGFC is valuable and an indication of improved coordination within the Commission.

The MCPFE is highlighted as an example, where improvement is visible. Indication of this is given by involvement of the Commission representatives in the MCPFE working groups (follow-up of MCPFE process), and improved coordination through the ISG on

Forestry i.e. information sharing within the Commission in preparing for the MCPFE and its meetings. This is confirmed by a stakeholder observation: more Commission departments are today aware of MCPFE than before.

Based on the Commission assessment, the ISG is effective and efficient in contributing to coherent Community actions. The feedback from the Member States however, indicates that the mutual information sharing has not guaranteed coordination or proactive and holistic approach to the forest sector related initiatives. In the Member State responses [3 responses], the example of different sustainability criteria for wood (i.e. forest products mentioned under Green Public Procurement, biomass under RES Directive proposal and timber under FLEGT due diligence proposal) is mentioned where the coordination has not been successful (see Evaluation Question 8). Furthermore, the Member States pointed out the existence of two inter-services' groups: one on forestry and another one on international forestry. More transparency is requested for the ISG meetings and clarification of the role and tasks of the two ISGs. Means for improving transparency of the meetings could be e.g. availability of the list of items on the agenda and the meeting minutes. The list of contact persons in the Commission departments and services presented to the SCF in 2007/2008 is appreciated, but the Member States and stakeholders would like to see more information about the sectoral activities i.e. which DG is responsible for which forest-related action. The list of contact persons of the Commission DGs which was presented to the SFC in 2007 does not give such detail.



**Figure 19. Member State and stakeholder assessments on the success of the EU FAP in improving coordination and coherence between different policy areas in forest sector within EU Commission.**

Member States and stakeholders generally consider that the EU FAP has been successful in improving the coordination and coherence between different policy areas within the Commission (see Figure 19). However, some respondents from both groups also give a very negative assessment. The EU FAP is a tool to improve the coordination and coherence within the Commission, and to inform the SFC and AGFC about forest-related actions and initiatives. At the same time, the mid-term evaluation feedback emphasises the need for a more coherent and more proactive approach to the forest sector related issues across the policy areas.

## Conclusions

The EU FAP has been efficient and effective in improving the mutual information sharing between Commission services on forestry issues thus contributing to better coordination within the Commission as well as improving the coherence between different

Community actions. Coordination through the EU FAP (e.g. the SFC Work Programme providing an agenda) has also ensured structured information sharing to the SFC and AGFC. However, the need for a coherent and proactive approach to the forest sector remains: many forest sector related initiatives are prepared in parallel processes in several policy areas. In addition to the Inter-Services' Group on Forestry, there is also an Inter-Services' Group on International Forestry in the Commission. The Inter-Services' Group on International Forestry is not involved in the implementation of the EU FAP. The international processes, e.g. in relation to the climate change have recently increased the need for improved co-ordination and coherence as well as the need to review the co-ordination of the forest-related issues within the Commission.

### **Recommendations**

The Commission should update the list of contact persons for forest-related policies in the Commission DGs (already presented to the SFC in 2007) with indication of the contact persons' field of expertise and reference to the EU FAP Key Action(s); the list should be updated regularly. The list could be utilised in order to target the invitations to the DG representatives to participate in the EU FAP events, but also in order to share information on the goals of the EU FAP and to report about its progress.

The Commission should review tasks of the two forest-related ISGs in order to investigate how the inter-services' co-ordination could still be improved for implementation of the EU FAP.

***EVALUATION THEME 5 Dissemination of best practices and improving the visibility of the sector***

Evaluation Theme 5 covers EU FAP Key Actions 15-18 i.e. open method of coordination (OMC) to national forest programmes, EU profile in international forest-related processes, use of wood and other forest products from sustainably managed forests, and improving information exchange and communication.

***EQ8: To what extent have the activities of key actions 15 and 17 of the Forest Action Plan carried out so far, e.g. the application of the Open Method of Coordination, been effective and efficient in disseminating best practices?***

This evaluation question concerns activities carried out to disseminate best practices in two separate Key Actions: Key Action 15 on exploring Open Method of Coordination to voluntary coordination in the field of forest policy (NFPs) and Key Action 17 on encouraging the use of wood and other forest products from sustainably managed forests.

Investigation on OMC has not been started; in the EU FAP Work Programme it is scheduled for 2010-2011. Therefore, no assessment is given on the effectiveness or efficiency of disseminating best practices in the Key Action 15.

According to the Commission, the Commission Communication on innovative and sustainable forest-based industries in the EU was deliberately adopted in parallel to the EU FAP because stakeholders wanted this. The communication (COM(2008) 113) was adopted in 2008. According to the Commission, the EU FAP and the FBI Communication are parallel complementary actions. Activities in the EU FAP Objective 1, such as the SFC ad hoc Working Group on Wood Mobilisation for Energy from Forest Resources (Key Action 4) and the study on fragmentation of ownership (Key Action 5) can be seen as measures in line with the actions defined in the FBI Communication. These activities have been discussed in the analysis of Evaluation Theme 1, which also includes the Member States' and stakeholders' request for a more holistic approach to the forest sector development.

Exchange of experience on development of public procurement guidelines has taken place in 2007-2008 in the SFC as well as in two conferences arranged in cooperation between the Member States (DK) and Commission as well as in cooperation between several Commission DGs. The SFC ad hoc Working Group on Public Procurement for wood and wood-based products started its work in 2009 and will be a forum to exchange experience and disseminate practices between the Member States together with the expertise from the Commission and stakeholder organisations. As already discussed in Key Actions 3, 4 and 6 the Working Groups are perceived to be a very efficient and effective way of information sharing and consensus building. The fact that in the EU FAP mid-term evaluation survey, 15 Member States report that they are developing guidelines for application of the Public Procurement Directive to forest products, and another seven countries are planning the activity, shows that there are synergies attainable from sharing experiences and practices in this field. On the other hand, there seems to be a time window open for the SFC to have an impact also by

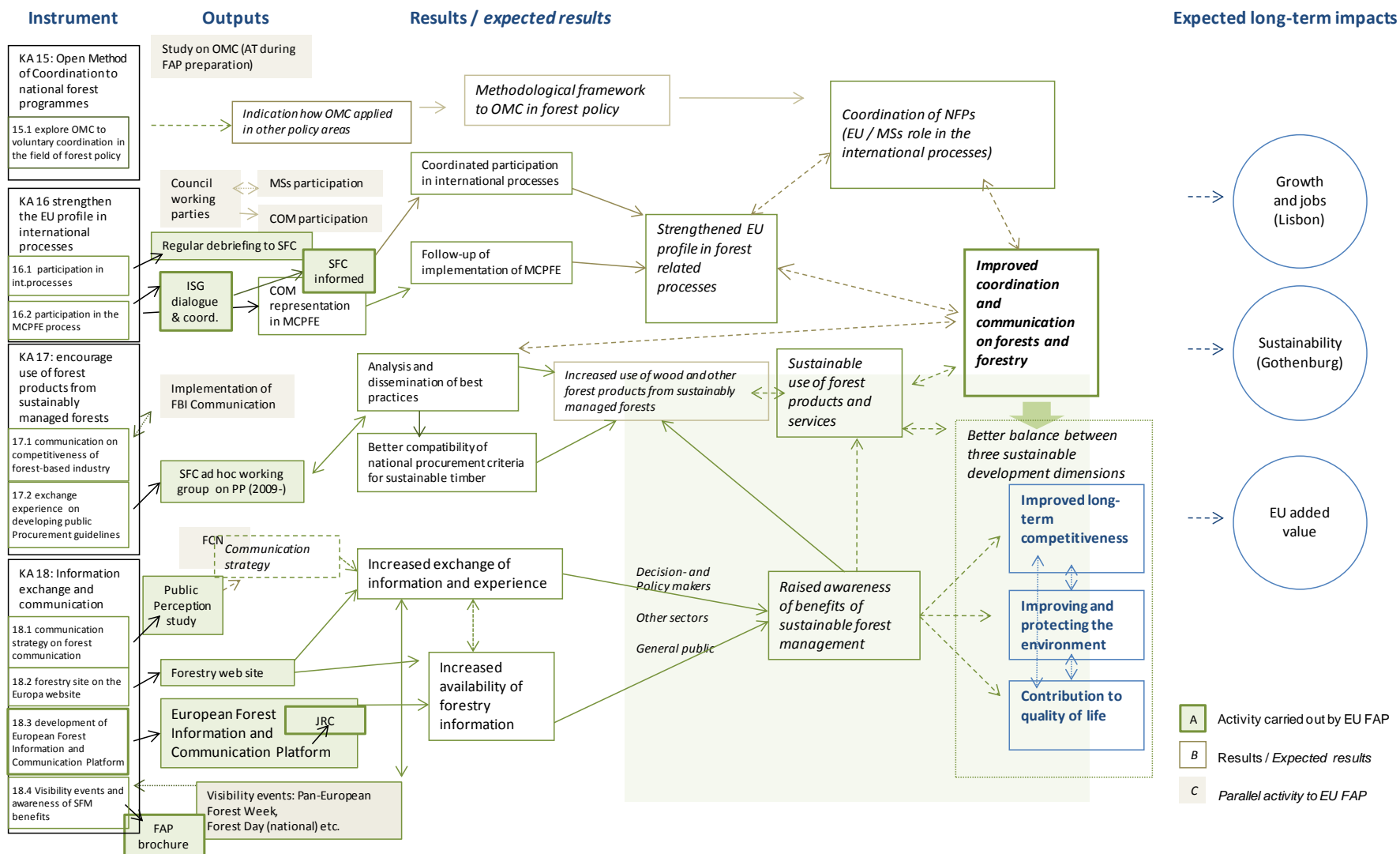


Figure 20. IL model for the Evaluation Theme 5 Dissemination of best practices and improving the visibility of the sector (EU FAP Objective 4).

providing guidance to the preparation of GPP guidance following the GPP communication at the Commission.

Together with the EU FAP objective to encourage use of wood and other forest products of sustainably managed forests there are several attempts ongoing to define indicators and criteria for wood and other forest products. The theme has accumulated in several initiatives in 2007-2008. A Green Public Procurement (GPP) communication (COM/2008/400) includes construction, wood, paper, energy and furniture among the priority sectors. The RES Directive (COM(2008)19), which was adopted in June 2009 includes sustainability criteria for biomass for energy production. The FLEGT system due diligence proposal (COM(2008)644) introduces legality as a criteria for timber and timber products. Also certification and eco-labelling systems have built criteria and systems for assessing sustainability. This development work has been ongoing also at national level, with several countries having already developed or developing national policies e.g. towards Green Public Procurement. These actions are parallel to the EU FAP.

In the mid-term evaluation the representatives of the Commission [3 DG responses], Member States [2 responses] and stakeholders [1 response] expressed explicitly their concern on different, and even conflicting demands placed on the forest sector. There is a pressure to intensify the use of wood and, at the same time, to ensure the protection of forests. There is a need to improve wood mobilisation, and at the same time, to regulate placing timber on the EU market to ensure that wood does not come from unsustainable sources. According to the feedback in the mid-term evaluation, the situation can increase confusion and affect the image of forest products. The pan-European Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management C&I have been defined in the MCPFE process, but the feedback from the Commission [3 DG responses] in the mid-term evaluation interviews is that there is a need for more operational criteria.

The aim of encouraging the use of forest products from sustainably managed forests as defined in Key Action 17 requires, not only dissemination of best practices, but even more so, a holistic approach on how to define sustainability (or other criteria). As pointed out in the mid-term evaluation feedback by the Member States, in the worst case scenario for the forest sector, the parallel initiatives can result in a set of contradicting criteria, and at its worst, this could end with negative effect on sustainable management of forests in the EU.

## **Conclusions**

Activities in relation to the dissemination of best practices and improving the visibility of the forest sector have been carried out to a large extent as planned in the EU FAP Work programme. The activity concerning the open method of co-ordination for NFPs is planned for the second period of implementation.

Use of wood and other forest products from sustainably managed forests has been encouraged in the EU FAP – e.g. by exchange of experience between the Member States. The SFC ad hoc Working Group on Public Procurement for wood and wood based-products has started its work in 2009, at a point when several Member States are



planning or preparing new or revising existing PP schemes for wood. The timing gives a good basis for efficient and effective dissemination of best practices. The goal of EU FAP encouraging use of wood could be hampered by the fact that there are several sets of sustainability criteria being defined in parallel policy areas in the EU. These different sets of sustainability criteria are being defined in different policy areas, for example in energy and public procurement, and they affect the use of forest products (biomass, wood, cork, wood-based products, paper, etc.) and sustainable forest management. Sustainability criteria of forest products should be streamlined in order to avoid different requirements for management practices depending of the final use.

## **Recommendations**

The SFC ad hoc working groups have been assessed as an effective and efficient working method, the dissemination of best practices is already underway with the Working Group on Public Procurement for wood and wood-based products. In order to make the work more effective, the experience gained in other SFC ad hoc Working Groups (ref. EU FAP Objective 1 Key Actions 3 and 4) should be utilised for disseminating the results to the policy formulation at the EU and Member State levels.

The Member States should discuss the need for EU criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management and how a definition of criteria – now defined differently for the forest products in several policy areas in the EU – could be made more coherent. The SFC should discuss the relationship between the different sets of sustainability criteria that are being defined in different policy areas (i.e. energy, public procurement, etc.) and sustainable forest management practices.

Key Action 15: As a contribution to the post-2011 discussion, the Member States and the Commission should investigate the open method of coordination (OMC) to NFPs/national forest policies and other options for governance in order to achieve improved coordination and coherence in forest policy in the EU (see Evaluation Question 6).

***EQ9: To what extent have the activities of key action 16 of the Forest Action Plan carried out so far, been effective and efficient in strengthening the visibility of the EU in international forest-related processes?***

The objective of the Key Action 16 is to strengthen the EU profile in international processes. The aim is to achieve this by participation in the MCPFE process and other international processes relevant to forests and forestry. During 2007-2009 the activities carried out have been information sharing, within the Commission (i.e. between the DGs participating in international processes), and between the Commission and the Member States. This information sharing has taken place within the Commission in the ISG on Forestry, and from the Commission to the Member States in the SFC, and to the stakeholders in the AGFC.

There is a division of tasks within Commission on the international processes: DG Agriculture and Rural Development is responsible for Commission involvement in the pan-European process, and DG Environment is responsible for Commission involvement in UNFF, CBD and UNFCCC. Responsibilities in relation to other international meetings and processes are decided according to the subject to be dealt with. Improved coordination of Commission involvement (e.g. in MCPFE and FAO COFO meetings) has been called for in the meetings of the ISG on forestry. Though not specifically mentioned in the EU FAP, there is also an ISG on international forestry in the Commission. The aim of the ISG on international forestry is to facilitate inter-service coordination on international forest policy issues, e.g. positions for United National Forum on Forests UNFF. The group has occasional meetings in response to developments in the international agenda.

Mid-term evaluation surveys requested the Commission and the Member States assessments on the effect and impact which the EU FAP has had on the EU profile in the international processes. The overall estimation is that there is minimal, if any, change in the EU profile due to the EU FAP: the EU FAP has not changed the EU involvement and profile in international processes. In feedback from the Commission, however, it is also pointed out that the effect can be defined as a more indirect process towards the aim: no direct impact can be expected because the international processes are complex and linked to other factors, but the EU FAP has forced a clarification of the position of Member States on many issues, and this in turn, assists in defining common positions that can be elevated at the international forums, such as at UNFF and MCPFE. The Member State responses to the mid-term evaluation survey seem to confirm this interpretation, though it is not specifically emphasised in the responses.

The EU FAP aims to take a proactive approach allowing the forest sector to enhance its competitiveness and economic viability, and to address the growing needs and expectations of society and the challenges of globalisation. This means not only being visible in the international processes, but also taking a lead in the discussions and developments in the international forums. In the mid-term evaluation feedback more effort is called for to ensure the EU profile in international issues e.g. preparation for the negotiations on international agreements biodiversity 2010, carbon rights trade, and processes linked to climate change, deforestation, wood imports and illegal logging. A coordinated response to forest-related aspects in the climate change negotiations would be needed, this is pointed out by both the Member States [2 responses] and the stakeholders [3 responses]. The Copenhagen climate change meeting forthcoming in December 2009 is proposed as an opportunity to make the EU forest sector perspective more visible. A stakeholder proposes that a specific EU communication on forests and climate change in relation to this event could be defined. Furthermore, a stakeholder would also like to see the forest issues raised on the agendas of the EU high-level meetings with third countries (e.g. South America, USA, China) or as initiatives for international industrial strategy including international investment in climate and energy. As already discussed in relation to the climate change (Key Action 6, Evaluation Question 3), the mid-term evaluation survey responses show confusion on how this more active role of the EU would be achieved or to where these requests should be targeted – e.g. the role of the Council and its working parties, or the role of the European Parliament in the EU decision making does not become visible through the EU FAP.

An example of such a process is given in the mid-term evaluation feedback, namely the REDD communication (COM(2008) 645 final) which was adopted in October 2008. The Commission communication was reflected in the EU Council conclusions for the Poznan Conference (UNFCCC COP14) in December 2008. It was briefed to the AGFC meetings in July and December 2008. Together with the REDD communication, the Commission put forward the proposal for a regulation laying down the obligations of operators who place timber and timber products on the market (COM(2008)644). This proposal stems from trade of tropical timber, but the proposal has been discussed, modified and added through handling in the European Parliament and in the Council. At the stage of mid-term evaluation, the proposal is still under handling in 2009, but from the evaluation point of view it is noteworthy that during 2007-2008 there has been no role of the EU FAP or its organisational set-up in relation to the REDD communication or the proposal preparation. The aim of the EU FAP (Key Action 16) to improve visibility of EU in the international processes would require more concerted action – to make a contribution from the EU forestry to the global goals (e.g. challenges of deforestation, forest degradation and poverty reduction), but also to understand how these initiatives affect forestry and forest sector in the EU.

In the mid-term evaluation feedback, one Member State specifically requests a more holistic approach to international forest issues i.e. integration of UNFCCC, UNFF and CBD into the EU FAP.

## **Conclusions**

The EU FAP has been an efficient way to share information and to reach the representatives of the SFC, the AGFC and the ISG on Forestry. The effect of the EU FAP on the international forest-related processes is indirect. In other words, the EU FAP acts as a forum for dialogue and contributes to better understanding of different views, and perhaps also to defining a common direction and goals for the forest sector in the EU and the role of the EU forest sector with regard to global goals (e.g. poverty reduction, and preventing deforestation and degradation of forests). The word ‘forest sector’ is used here to emphasise that this refers not only to forests and forestry, but to the forest-based sector as a whole.

Although the EU FAP defines as its goal to strengthen the EU profile in international forest-related processes, the international forestry issues are not directly within the scope of the EU FAP. For example, the preparations for the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP) meeting in Copenhagen in 2009 take place in the Member States and in the EU institutions. At the mid-term there is no concerted action towards the aim of strengthening the visibility of the EU in international forest-related processes through the EU FAP framework. Estimation is that there is minimal, if any, change on the EU profile due to the EU FAP, even though the mid-term evaluation shows that there are expectations for an effect from the EU FAP to more coordinated approach and presentation of the EU in the international forest-related processes.

International forestry issues are not directly within the scope of the EU FAP – e.g. there is an ISG on International Forestry in order to improve coordination within Commission

but this group is parallel to the EU FAP. Increasing globalisation and the global challenges (e.g. climate change) would require better integration of the international forest-related processes and initiatives into the EU FAP. This means not only information from the international processes to the EU forest sector, but also contribution from the EU forest sector to preparations for the processes – including assessment of how forestry and the forest sector in the EU would be affected by the proposed measures.

### **Recommendation**

The Commission, Member States and stakeholders should continue and strengthen the dialogue and reciprocal information sharing in the implementation of the EU FAP. During the remaining implementation period 2009-2011 the EU FAP should also be utilised to encourage information sharing between the Member States and the stakeholders on their involvement in the international processes.

Better integration of international and EU forestry issues is needed. The SFC should trigger and coordinate the discussion of the Member States about what will happen after the EU FAP 2011, including the validity of the EU Forestry Strategy (Council Resolution of 15 December 1998) in relation to the global challenges and related ongoing processes. It should also be discussed, what role the EU should have in the pan-European process (MCPFE) – i.e. how synergy between the EU FAP and the MCPFE work programme could be promoted (as discussed in previous Evaluation Questions concerning SFM and C&I) – and on the other hand, how the EU FAP is expected to contribute to the global goals.

#### ***EQ10: To what extent have the activities of key action 18 of the Forest Action Plan carried out so far, in particular the development of a European Forest Information and Communication Platform, been effective and efficient?***

Activities to improve information exchange and communication (Key Action 18) have to a large extent taken place in accordance with the Work Programme. A Commission study on public perceptions of forests and forestry is underway in 2009. According to the Commission the study is a basis for discussing and defining the communication strategy on forest communication together with the Member States in SFC.

The Commission forestry web-site under the DG AGRI website is a useful document library for EU Forestry Strategy and the Action Plan. It, however, does not include a comprehensive list of studies and reports produced in the EU FAP as they are indicated in the progress reports. These materials have been referred to in the ISG, SFC and AGFC meeting materials, but they make a useful information base that could be made more easily reachable also to those who are not involved in the EU FAP implementation. At the moment the studies are to be found in the web-pages of the DG responsible for commissioning the study.

The UNECE/FAO Forest Communicators' Network (FCN) was established by the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC) with the overall objective to improve the ability of the forest and forest products sector to communicate effectively. In its mandate (2008), among the major expected outputs by 2013 are mentioned e.g. the contributions to the EU FAP, in particular on forest-related environmental education and on a European forest communication strategy. The role of the FCN in the implementation of the EU FAP is not defined. Rather, it is a parallel action to the EU FAP. The connection made in the EU FAP work programme to the FCN reflects a clear synergy of building on the existing network and the work already done. Active participation of the EU Member States and involvement of the Presidencies in arranging the FCN workshops and meetings shows an effort to ensure more efficient use of resources – e.g. the FCN workshop during the Czech presidency in June 2009 aimed to contribute to the definition of the EU communication strategy for the forest sector.

Work on the development of a European Forest Information and Communication Platform (EFICP)<sup>47</sup> is also raised in the Evaluation Question. The preparatory stage for EFICP has been completed as a study by JRC. EFICP aims at providing a system for internet-based information and communication in the European forest sector. The Commission assesses the EFICP as a good start with the demonstration version already showing the potential of this type of tool. The EFICP has become integral part of the European Forest Data Centre (EFDAC) and the further development of EFDAC requires continuous dialogue with the Member States for exchange of information in the forestry sector – in other words the work remains to be done and the data provision from the Member States remains to be secured (EU FAP Key Action 8).

There are no resources earmarked for visibility events in the EU FAP. Though no visibility events have been arranged in the EU FAP, many parallel events have taken place during 2007-2009. As an example of such parallel and not linked activity, the Commission coordinates the annual Green Week – in 2009 with the theme of climate change. The pan-European Forestry Week was arranged by MCPFE/UNECE/FAO in October 2008, and Member States' involvement was encouraged through SFC meetings. The Forestry Week covered several national and stakeholder events around Europe. Especially the local activities in the Member States are mentioned as specific and successful actions towards more visibility for the forest sector [4 responses].

In fact, many visibility activities – such as forest days or forest weeks – are ongoing on a regular basis in the Member States. Also National Forest Programme (NFP) communication plans and forums are highlighted in this respect: communication measures are the key element in implementing the NFPs. Stakeholders are active on their own initiative and arrange promotion activities and campaigns locally, nationally and at the EU level. These activities have been ongoing without the EU FAP. Thus the contribution of EU FAP towards the aim of raised awareness of the forest sector and raised awareness of the benefits of sustainable forest management is indirect. There is progress towards this goal by activities at national, regional and local levels. At the moment these parallel activities are not linked to the EU FAP.

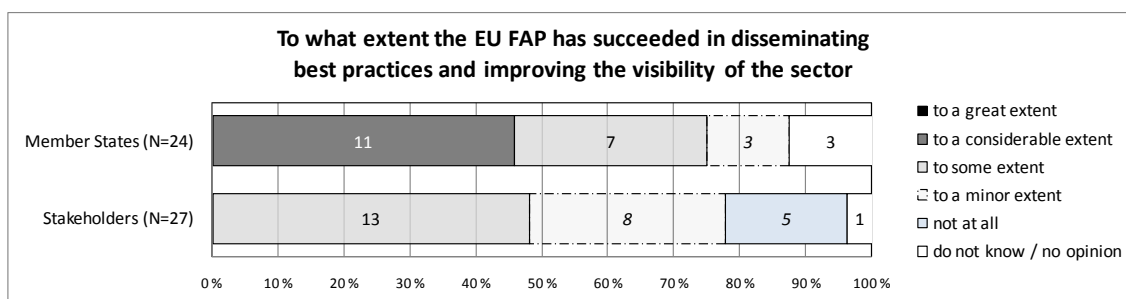
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<sup>47</sup> <http://eficp.jrc.ec.europa.eu/EFICP/>

The EU FAP work programme does not foresee an investigation into how the regular events and the resources already mobilised could be utilised in the implementation of the EU FAP. Neither does the EU FAP work programme yet envisage sharing of ideas concerning the forthcoming forest-related international events, such as World Forestry Week (March 2009), World Forestry Congress (October 2009), Forest Day 3 (December 2009 in connection with the Copenhagen Climate Conference), or the International Year of Forests in 2011.

In the mid-term evaluation surveys several Commission representatives [3 DG responses] and stakeholders [3 responses] state that there is a clear deficit in information and communication measures both at the Commission and Member State levels: the EU FAP has had little effect within the EU institutions and practically none outside that area. Besides the Commission and Member State officials who are formally involved, very few people are aware of the existence of the EU FAP. This observation is confirmed by the stakeholder feedback in the mid-term evaluation. Rather than being an assessment on the effectiveness or efficiency of the activities carried out to increase visibility, this observation reveals a blind spot in the EU FAP implementation: the EU FAP, its objectives and implementation is not widely known. In very general terms, those who are directly involved in the EU FAP, are “in and well informed”; those who attend the EU FAP meetings or events only occasionally and those who are not directly involved in the implementation, are “out and unaware”.

There are no resources for disseminating the EU FAP results. In the response to the mid-term evaluation survey the stakeholders invite the EU FAP information and results to be disseminated and advocated through their own activities and events. Similar connections could be made to the national activities – ongoing on a regular basis anyway. This kind of information sharing can be expected to happen to some extent on its own (i.e. good and useful results sell themselves), but a more structured approach would increase efficiency of dissemination and allow specific target groups to be reached – e.g. key policy and decision makers, or the interrelated sectors as discussed in Evaluation Question 2 relating to the competitiveness objective.



**Figure 21. Member State and stakeholder assessments on the success of the EU FAP in disseminating best practices and improving the visibility of the sector.**

In the mid-term evaluation surveys there was no specific question on success of the EU FAP in relation to information exchange and communication, but the question was set: to what extent has the EU FAP succeeded in disseminating best practices and improving the visibility of the sector? The Member States give considerably higher assessment

than the stakeholders (see Figure 21). Especially the producers and the industry representatives of the stakeholders assess the results as very modest.

In order to increase the weight of forestry issues in the political agenda, a wider understanding on the role of forests and the forest-based sector as a whole should be promoted across the EU. This is reflected in the mid-term evaluation feedback: the perception is that the “Forest Action” is a matter in the interest of all. This should be shown in the dialogue involving EU-level bodies and organisations, Member States and stakeholders, but also groups outside the traditional forest sector (e.g. consumers, service producers, local authorities, citizens groups, young people) to contribute to the discussion. This proposal does not yet define who should be the leading actor to initiate such dialogue. The initiative can come from Member States, from the Commission, from stakeholders, from politicians or, as the example of Forestry Week in 2008 showed, from outside the EU. The mid-term evaluation feedback shows that there is willingness among the key actors already involved in the EU FAP implementation for a more concerted action in the forest sector communication.

## **Conclusions**

The establishment of a European Forest Information and Communication Platform (EFICP) is a concrete step towards improving availability of forestry information, but assessment of effectiveness or efficiency would require that the platform was operational with contents and regular information and data updates – at the mid-term evaluation this work still remains to be done.

The EU FAP multiannual work programme has been efficient in scheduling the work and has provided a useful source of information about the EU action. But the EU FAP is not well known outside the group of people directly involved in implementation. In order to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the EU FAP it would be crucial to make the EU FAP better known to a wider group of forest sector stakeholders and other sectors e.g. energy, environment and agriculture.

There are no specific resources earmarked at the Commission for the EU FAP communication and dissemination of the results. The study on public perceptions is a valuable contribution to the definition of a communication strategy on forest communication. However, the aim of enhancing awareness on forests and forestry – and the forest-based sector as a whole – would require a more structured approach to information and communication. In order to improve efficiency and effectiveness it would be crucial to make the EU action known. At the moment the added value at an EU level remains to a large extent unattained: there are several parallel forest sector information and communication activities and events (such as regular forest days, forest weeks, stakeholder activities and campaigns in favour of forests and Sustainable Forest Management), but they are not linked to the EU FAP and the goals defined at the level of the EU. Without better synergy of already existing networks and efforts to improve forest communication in Europe (e.g. the national measures and the UNECE/FAO Forest Communicators’ Network), resources are used for individual parallel activities, but the fact that there is also an EU Forest Action Plan remains unknown to the public. Better utilisation of the existing channels for dissemination of the EU FAP outputs, in

particular to decision-makers on all levels but also to the relevant key stakeholders and the general public, would also contribute to better launch of activities at the national, regional and local levels.

## **Recommendations**

There should be a communication strategy defined, how the EU Forest Action Plan and the sustainable forest management in the EU could be promoted:

The Commission should consider what the means there are for making the EU FAP more known and more visible in the EU communication (i.e. through the means and channels that Commission has for communication).

The Member States should consider how the already ongoing activities, information and communication measures at the national (and sub-national) level could link up with the EU FAP, and make the EU action visible also at the national and sub-national levels.

The Member States and the Commission should define how the Forest Communicators' Network could be better utilised in the EU FAP e.g. in definition and implementation of the forest communication strategy.

There are several international events with focus on forests forthcoming during 2009-2011. The Commission and the SFC in consultation with the AGFC should discuss how these events (e.g. the International Year of Forests 2011) could be utilised to make the EU action for sustainable forest management more visible, and raise the public awareness on the benefits of forests and sustainable forest management.



***EVALUATION THEME 6 Relevance of the objectives, key actions and activities of the Action Plan***

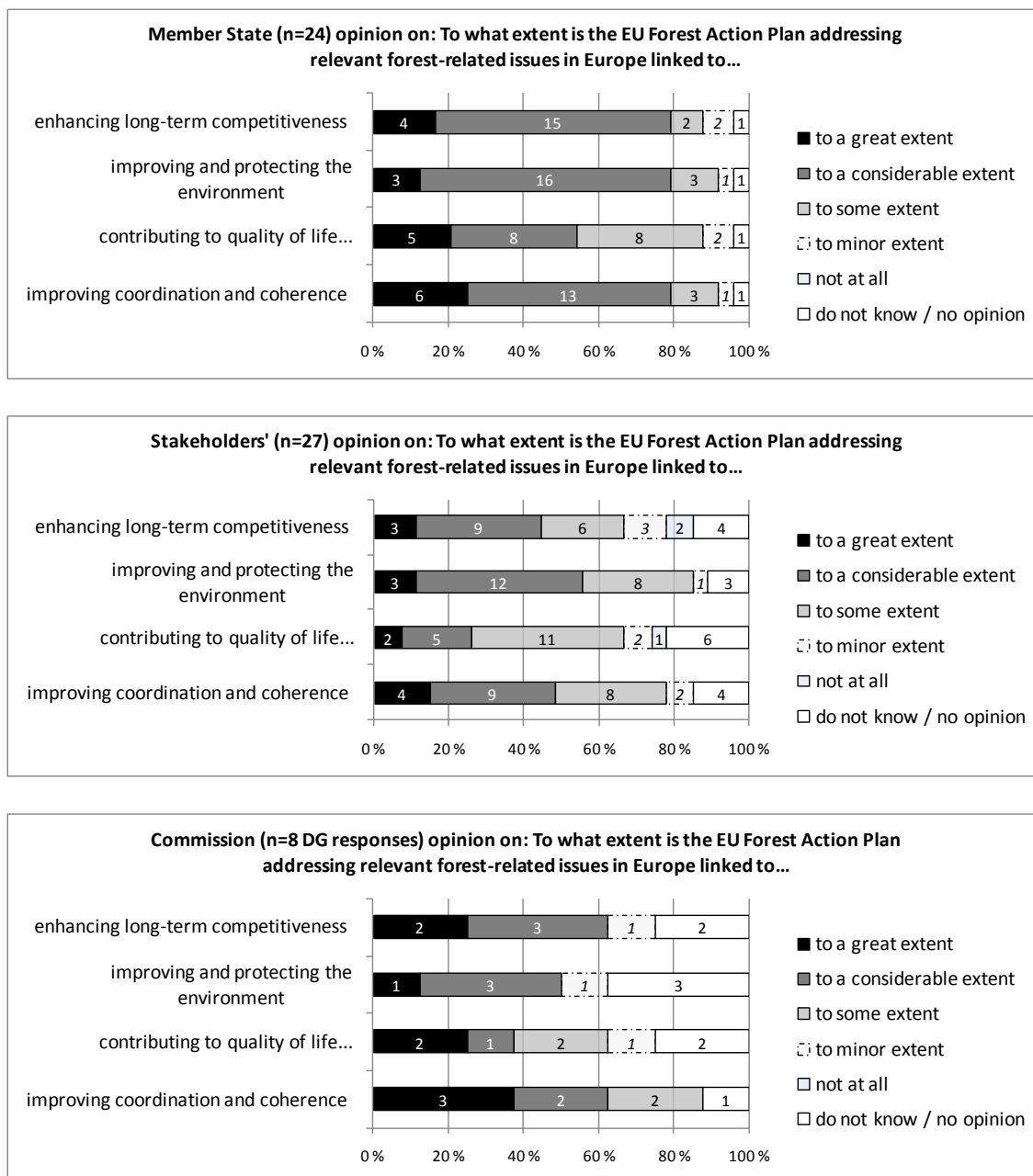
***EQ11: Are the current specific objectives, key actions and activities of the Forest Action Plan relevant in addressing the needs that the Plan was meant to address? To what extent is the organisational set-up of the Forest Action Plan as a whole adequate for its purpose?***

In the following section, the analysis for this Evaluation Question covers the relevance of *issues* (specific objectives and coverage of the plan), relevance of *Key Actions and Activities* and relevance of *organisational set up*. Relevance is assessed with regard to the extent to which the EU FAP is consistent with stakeholder requirements, Member State needs, global priorities, and Community policies.

The **EU FAP Objectives 1-3** of improving long-term competitiveness, improving and protecting the environment and contributing to the quality of life are thematic. Their wording already reveals that the EU FAP will not reach the specific objectives within its five-year duration. What it does is to ‘work towards’, ‘support’, ‘promote’ and ‘contribute’ to these aims. In general the feedback from stakeholders, Member States and the Commission that the objectives are relevant and there is a good coverage in the EU FAP. In fact, the objectives are the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and ecological), and as such they “need to be there”. The **EU FAP Objective 4** for fostering coordination and communication is more horizontal, and covers – to a certain extent – the three thematic objectives by defining working methods and processes.

Figure 22 summarises the assessment by the Member States and stakeholders and the 8 Commission DGs which gave a numerical indication on the question: To what extent is the EU FAP addressing relevant forest-related issues in Europe linked to the four EU FAP Objectives. The assessments vary across the specific EU FAP objectives, but the Member States, the Commission DGs and the stakeholders underline the importance of the coordination and coherence objective. It is worth pointing out that many stakeholders respond to the question with “do not know / no opinion”, and some indicate explicitly that they do not have sufficient knowledge to give an assessment of whether relevant issues are addressed or not.

In the mid-term evaluation surveys, the question of balance between the three thematic objectives was brought up by several respondents. In other words, although it is important to address the three dimensions of sustainability, there are different views and expectations regarding which part of the Action Plan would deserve more emphasis. The EU FAP can be understood as an approach to continue the dialogue between the three dimensions, to raise understanding of different functions forests play in the EU, and to make also the world outside the forest sector (e.g. interrelated sector such as agriculture, environment, energy and industry, as well as the public) more aware of the importance of the forest sector in all these dimensions (economic, ecological and social).



**Figure 22. Assessment by the Member States, stakeholders and the Commission services on the question: To what extent is the EU Forest Action Plan addressing relevant forest-related issues in Europe linked to the four EU FAP Objectives.**

The stakeholders were also asked in the mid-term evaluation survey to assess the extent to which the EU FAP objectives are compatible with their reference group’s objectives. Producers and industry stakeholders recognise the EU FAP as the first forest sector action to acknowledge the competitiveness aspect of forestry. This perspective is also confirmed by the Member States [3 responses and implicitly in several other responses]: the EU FAP Objective 1 has raised the economic dimension of forests as an issue, and competitiveness is more recognised as an important objective with regard to sustainable forest management. These statements do not undermine the environmental or the quality

of life objective, merely they emphasise that the economic, ecologic and social dimensions of sustainable forestry are interlinked, and the EU FAP has consciously raised this issue.

One specific concern raised in the mid-term evaluation feedback by both the Member States and stakeholders was the need for a more holistic approach to the forest sector. Two aspects were raised in this respect: the “forest action” should cover both forests and the forest-based sector as a whole to a greater extent than it does at the moment, and the “EU forest action” should integrate the international processes related to forests to a greater extent than it does at the moment.

The parallel actions in the EU e.g. the FBI communication on forest-based industries, the EU Biomass Plan on bioenergy, the EU Biodiversity Plan on halting the loss of biodiversity, and the EU FLEGT Action Plan on facilitating trade in legal timber and eliminating illegal timber trading are interlinked. They put demands for forestry in the EU. The fact that these actions are mentioned in the EU FAP can raise awareness of the interlinkages and parallel processes. The EU FAP is acknowledged by the Member States and stakeholders as a comprehensive plan with an important goal of being informed about the other actions. But there are expectations that the EU FAP would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the EU forest sector as a whole and how the parallel actions affect it.

A more holistic approach is also requested in relation to the international arrangements, and integration of international processes such as UNFCCC, UNFF, CBD in the EU FAP. This issue is already addressed in the EU FAP. The aim of the EU FAP is to contribute to better fulfilment of obligations set in the international processes. The discussions in the SFC, AGFC and ISG are expected to indirectly affect towards this aim. There are expectations that the EU FAP would contribute also to a more concerted action from the EU forest sector as a whole e.g. in the climate change negotiations.

The wide coverage of issues included in the EU FAP is reflected in the **Key Actions and Activities**: there are 18 Key Actions and 55 activities in total listed in the multiannual work programme 2007-2011. The EU FAP gathers the activities and Key Actions under its objectives and highlights their impact on the forest sector. As part of a comprehensive plan, the individual activities can gain in weight on the policy agenda.

Based on the mid-term evaluation feedback, the Key Actions are relevant. The EU FAP Objective 3 activities start in 2009 and there is a possibility for the Member States and the Commission to check the relevance of activities envisaged in the Work Programme. For the activities already carried out, the connection from discussions to actions needs to be strengthened in order to take steps forward towards the specific objectives as defined for the EU FAP. There are no follow-up and systematic monitoring mechanisms on how the individual measures taken (studies, meetings, working group reports and recommendations, resolutions and opinions) lead to actual activities carried out e.g. by the Commission, by the Member States or by the stakeholders. One part of the relevance is how well the outputs find their way to larger audiences and to what extent the outputs are utilised outside the group directly involved in implementing the EU FAP.

Information and communication measures were pointed out in the mid-term evaluation surveys as a weakness in the implementation. This becomes clear in the responses from those forest sector stakeholders that are not directly involved in the implementation of the EU FAP: they do not know about the Action Plan. If there is no awareness of the EU FAP, the synergy effect for an EU level forestry action is missed and individual activities at local, regional, national, and EU levels do not necessarily connect with the EU FAP goals. Many respondents in the mid-term evaluation also call for measures concerning the general public and its awareness and perceptions on e.g. the role of forests or wood as a raw material. This would contribute to the overall importance of the forestry (and forest-based sector) in Europe, and give the EU FAP a wider impact. Without dissemination and communication there is a risk that what are perceived as results from the EU FAP implementation are the issues and meetings, but very little other than this. Improved information and communication is an opportunity to strengthen the relevance of the Action Plan in implementing the EU Forestry Strategy goals, as well as its contribution to the Lisbon and Gothenburg goals.

Even though several remarks were made that the list of themes and activities included in the EU FAP is already very comprehensive – and perhaps already requires better focusing for the remaining 2009-2011 – also new issues were pointed out in the mid-term evaluation surveys. These topics are presented as an annex to the report. To a large part they can already be found under the headings of the EU FAP objectives and Key Actions (see Annex 5). The example of the climate change topic which has been given more emphasis in the EU FAP agenda during 2008/2009, shows that the EU FAP has been utilised in a flexible manner. Important topics have been given more space in the agenda as needed and consensus on the topic has been reached.

The need to start preparation of the follow-up of the EU FAP (after 2011) was brought up in a number of responses of the mid-term evaluation. This was highlighted as a way to check whether there is a need to adjust the agenda, but also to discuss the implementation methods and structures for future actions relating to the EU Forestry Strategy. A point was also made that the discussion of follow-up of the EU FAP would need to be connected with preparation of financial instruments of post-2013. This would contribute to the relevance of future actions after the EU FAP.

The **organisational set-up** is outlined in the EU Forest Action Plan and its work programme 2007-2011: *the Leading Actors in implementing the Action Plan are the Commission and the Member States. The Standing Forestry Committee is the coordinating body between the Commission and the Member States, and collaboration with stakeholders on implementation of the Action Plan at Community level is channelled mainly through the Advisory Group on Forestry and Cork.* The organisational set-up of the EU FAP by utilising the existing structures is perceived as adequate by the Commission, Member States (SFC) and stakeholders (AGFC).

**Standing Forestry Committee SFC** was an existing structure mobilised for the EU FAP. In a strict sense, SFC is not a comitology committee which role it had up until conclusion of the Forest Focus regulation in 2006. The EU FAP aims at strengthening the role of SFC, and today the EU FAP is seen by some respondents in the mid-term

evaluation surveys as the *raison d'être* for the SFC [2 DG responses]. The respondents also point out that the relevance of SFC is hampered since there are no functions defined for it in the formal decision making. There are no formal mechanisms on how the discussions or e.g. the SFC opinions contribute to policy making at EU or national levels. From the Commission's responses it can be interpreted that the SFC opinions are an approach towards building consensus, and as such they may affect the preparatory work at the Commission. The Member State responses do not identify how the agreement on specific topics in the SFC would contribute to implementation in the national level and to the points of views at the EU level. Member State discussions on decisions at the EU level take place in the **Council Working Parties** and expert groups. The forest issues vary in importance in the national policy arena: in some countries forestry policy is low, in others high on the national agenda and this reflects to the implementation of the EU FAP in the Member States.. The EU FAP themes are cross-sectoral and they are handled in several Council Working Parties (though the Working Party on Forestry in the Agriculture and Fisheries Council is the main group). This would require information channels in the Member States between the different sectoral ministries of e.g. environment, agriculture, energy, industry, trade and the economy. Are there such channels? And to what extent do the discussions and work carried out in SFC contribute to the work in the Council preparation? The EU FAP is expected to contribute that these channels and connections are used, and the forest-related initiatives gain political back-up in the EU policy and decision making.

At the same time the Member State responses underline that the main value of the EU FAP would be improved coordination within Commission. Better coordination within the Commission is required in order to achieve a more coherent approach towards the forest sector in initiatives and actions in different policy fields. The mid-term evaluation feedback shows that the **Inter-services' Group on Forestry** is an efficient forum to share information and together with the EU FAP work programme and the SFC (and the AGFC) meetings provide a good basis for informing and better coordination. The existence of a parallel other inter-services' group (i.e. the ISG on International Forestry) shows that there are different expectations of what is to be coordinated under the EU FAP – the Commission's approach is different from what was expressed by a Member State request for a more holistic approach and integration of international processes in the EU FAP.

The **stakeholders' involvement** is mainly channelled through the Advisory Group on Forestry and Cork (AGFC). In the mid-term evaluation survey, the stakeholders consider the AGFC an important forum for dialogue and information sharing. In concrete terms, the stakeholders' involvement in AGFC means: regular meetings and information about proceeding of the EU FAP by the Commission, AGFC Chairpersons' participation in SFC meetings, and nomination of the stakeholder experts to the SFC ad hoc Working Groups. In addition to this, the AGFC has concluded its resolutions e.g. on priorities for the EU FAP work programme 2007-2011, conclusions on forest fires, and proposal for a working group on climate change. In the mid-term evaluation survey the stakeholders mention also other forms of participation, such as own initiative opinions and statements, and information dissemination to the members. Many stakeholder activities are ongoing in parallel to the EU FAP. The dialogue in AGFC is seen in

principle as positive, but more *advisory* role is requested. The new working mode of SFC – ad hoc Working Groups – are seen as a method of better dialogue between the Commission, Member States and stakeholders, and also allow for better representation of different stakeholder groups in the implementation of the EU FAP. According to the feedback collected in the mid-term evaluation the role of the other advisory group (AC-FBI) in relation to the EU FAP has been minimal. AGFC is seen by the stakeholders as an adequate forum for stakeholder participation in the EU FAP implementation.

## Conclusions

The need defined by the Council “*to strengthen coherence between forest-related EU policies and initiatives, and to enhance co-ordination within the Commission and between the Commission and the Member States*” has not changed substantially during the first two years of the EU FAP implementation. The current specific objectives, Key Actions and activities are relevant for the remaining implementation period 2009-2011, and the mid-term evaluation gives the Member States and the Commission an opportunity to recheck the focus for the remaining years as appropriate.

The definition of the plan according to the three sustainability dimensions as EU FAP Objectives 1-3 is very relevant and provides a balanced approach to SFM. The main objectives of the FAP are also well reflected in the EU rural development policy, which is the main instrument at Community level for implementing the EU Forestry Strategy and Action Plan. The mid-term evaluation feedback shows that there can be an indirect effect from the EU FAP contributing to the national prioritisations and agenda setting. In this respect it is important that also the EU FAP Objective 3 is implemented during 2009-2011. At the national level, the NFPs cover the three sustainability dimensions with several activities, but at the moment the NFPs and measures do not efficiently connect with the EU FAP.

The EU FAP Key Actions and activities are relevant. The EU FAP and its outputs have reached the key policy-makers and the stakeholders who are directly involved in the implementation of the EU FAP, but other target groups (e.g. parallel sectors, wider groups of stakeholders) have not been reached. This hampers the relevance of the EU FAP to national and to EU level policy formulation and deliberations. Increasing the visibility of the EU FAP and its products – and later on its results – would improve the relevance of the EU FAP. Better awareness of the EU FAP also at the sub-national level would enhance the EU added value. In this respect the information and communication measures together with monitoring and follow-up of the EU FAP activities, are important to improve the relevance.

The EU FAP is based on the principle of subsidiarity and the concept of shared responsibility. Forest policy is the competence of the Member States, but the EU can contribute to the implementation of sustainable forest management through common actions. The organisational set-up of the EU FAP is adequate for the remaining implementation period 2009-2011, but the means for improving the utilisation of the existing structures (the SFC, the AGFC and the Inter-services’ Groups within the Commission) should be discussed, and the link between the EU FAP and the policy formulations and decision-making at the EU level and at the national levels should be

further strengthened. At the same time, it would be equally important to start discussions on the follow-up of the EU FAP after 2011, including the key elements, measures, potential financial instruments and organisational set-up of the action after EU FAP.

## **Recommendations**

In order to improve the relevance of the EU FAP, the Commission should discuss the results of the mid-term evaluation together with the SFC and the AGFC. The mid-term evaluation should be utilised to recheck the focus and priorities for the remaining implementation period of the EU FAP. The following aspects are raised for consideration:

- In order to emphasise the three sustainability dimensions and the multifunctional role of forests it is important to implement also the EU FAP Objective 3 Key Actions, and produce concrete outputs illustrating how forests contribute to quality of life.
- In order to show the added value of the EU FAP it is important to link the EU FAP to national (and sub-national) activities. This would require more structured monitoring of the Member States activities in support of the EU FAP. The existing NFPs (or equivalent) could be utilised as a basis for monitoring the Member State activities. This type of exercise could be started during 2009-2011, e.g. using the EU FAP work programme and the Key Actions as a checklist (the mid-term evaluation already provides state-of-the-play information for 2009).
- In order to show the effect of the activities already carried out in the EU FAP and the contribution the EU FAP makes to long-term competitiveness of the forest sector, to enhancing and protecting the environment and to quality of life, it would be important to arrange follow-up of the activities to show how the EU FAP outputs are realised as measures by the EU institutions, by the Member States and by the stakeholders. The follow-up could be arranged linked to already existing events, such as EU forest directors/nature directors meetings, working parties or expert group meetings, but also stakeholder activities, sub-national activities (territorial cooperation networks and activities) or e.g. research networks (COST or other actions and networks).
- Information and communication need to be strengthened to improve the leverage of the EU FAP. In order to attain the EU added value of the EU FAP it is important to make the EU FAP known also outside the groups directly involved in implementation of the EU FAP. Parallel sectors and wider groups of stakeholders should also be targeted in order to increase relevance to national and to EU level policy formulation and deliberations. More structured information and communication measures would be needed, and a communication strategy in support of the EU FAP could contribute towards this aim.

Discussion about the follow-up of the EU FAP after 2011 – and the implementation of the EU Forestry Strategy – should be started within the EU FAP framework (i.e. the SFC, the AGFC and the ISG), and a schedule should be made for extending the

discussions to the Member States, Council and other EU institutions, and a wider group of stakeholders. Based on the feedback collected in the mid-term evaluation the following aspects are raised for consideration in the post-2011 discussions:

- more holistic approach to forest sector issues;
- integration of the international forestry issues into the EU forestry action;
- higher profile of the EU in international forest-related processes;
- update of the EU Forestry Strategy considering emerging issues (list of themes and topics, Annex 5 of this report) and new challenges;
- strengthening of the science-policy-practice triangle by better coordination of scientific work and utilisation of financial resources (FP7, COST, national);
- financing i.e. preparation of post-2013 financial instruments.



## **6 Conclusions and recommendations**

### **Aim and background of the EU Forest Action Plan**

The aims of the mid-term evaluation of the 2007-2011 EU Forest Action Plan (EU FAP) are: to judge if the implementation is on track for meeting the objectives of the Action Plan, whether these objectives have been met so far, if the Action Plan has led to any side effects and whether the instruments used are relevant, effective and efficient.

The implementation of the EU FAP has started in accordance with the work programme defined for the Action Plan which considering that the Action Plan has no less than 18 Key Actions and 55 Activities is a remarkable achievement. The activities have been carried out to a large extent as planned in the multiannual Work Programme 2007-2011, and in this respect, the Action Plan has been implemented efficiently. The prioritisations made in the work programme have been followed: in other words, the implementation in 2007-2008 has focused on Objective 1 (long-term competitiveness), Objective 2 (enhancing and protecting the environment) and Objective 4 (co-ordination, coherence and communication). Objective 3 (contribution to quality of life) implementation at the EU level is underway for the second part of the implementation period 2009-2011.

The intensive preparation of the EU FAP in 2005-2006, in close cooperation between the Commission and the Member States and with consultation of the stakeholders, has provided a good basis for the start-up of the EU FAP. It has also raised expectations for the EU FAP. The dialogue and consultation approach has been continued from 2007 onwards but, at the mid-term, it is difficult to show concrete examples of effects that the EU FAP has had on Community actions or on the forest policies in the Member States.

### **Findings of the mid-term evaluation study**

The effects of the EU FAP on its specific goals of contributing to long-term competitiveness, enhancing and protecting the environment, and contributing to quality of life cannot be expected to show up after only two years of implementation. However, based on the results of the surveys of this evaluation, the EU FAP is on track. In other words, there is real progress with regard to more co-ordination across different policy areas, more coherent action within the Commission, more implementation in the Member States, and more awareness of the different situations and questions that relate to forests and forest-sector development in different parts of the EU. These steps forward are not major changes in practices, but the EU FAP does definitely contribute to a more co-ordinated approach for forest-related actions in the EU.

In the following analysis the key findings concerning the six evaluation themes of the EU FAP mid-term evaluation are summarised. In the previous chapter the analysis of the evaluation themes were concluded with recommendations made separately for each of the 11 evaluation questions grouped under the Evaluation Themes. Based on the

analysis and the recommendations specific to the Key Actions, this chapter presents a number of policy recommendations for each of the evaluation themes, as well as for the EU FAP as a whole for the remaining implementation period 2009-2011. For more details on each of the evaluation themes, see Chapter 5.

### **Evaluation Theme 1: improving long-term competitiveness**

The EU FAP activities contributing to the long-term competitiveness of the forest sector have been carried out to a large extent according to the Work Programme and, in this respect, the implementation of the work programme is efficient. The action concerning the forest owner co-operation and enhancement of education and training in forestry (Key Action 5) is to be started in 2009. The Standing Forestry Committee (SFC) ad hoc Working Groups as well as the studies produced in the EU FAP have been an effective and efficient way to mobilise expertise to support the EU FAP implementation. It remains for the Member States, the Commission as well as other stakeholders to put the outcomes from the discussions into practice.

At the stage of the mid-term evaluation, showing the contribution of the EU FAP to the long-term competitiveness of the sector is difficult. An indirect impact on the competitiveness can be expected, e.g. due to the knowledge gained by the studies and due to better definition of priorities and increased allocation of the 7<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme (FP7) resources for the forest-sector research in the EU, and due to the support provided under the rural development policy. Furthermore, a number of Member States indicate that the emphasis given in the EU FAP to, for example: bioenergy, non-wood goods and services, and research allocations, have an effect on the national agendas. Thus, there would be follow-up and activities in the Member States, but these activities cannot yet be shown after only two years of the EU FAP implementation.

There are no follow-up or monitoring mechanisms envisaged in the EU FAP multiannual work programme 2007-2011. Nor are there financial resources earmarked for the EU FAP implementation. The existing resources, rural development and regional policy funding, are to be utilised for financing the activities in support of the EU FAP. The Member States indicate that both EU and national funds are being utilised to enhance the competitiveness of the forest sector. Follow-up of activities already carried out in the EU FAP Objective 1 would be an additional measure to the activities defined in the EU FAP Work Programme, but follow-up would be needed to make the progress towards enhancing the competitiveness visible as well as to share good practices between the Member States, EU institutions and stakeholders.

The EU FAP reaches the key policy-makers and stakeholders to the extent that these are involved in the SFC and the Advisory Group on Forestry and Cork (AGFC) as well as the Inter-Services' Group (ISG) on Forestry within the Commission. The working mode of the SFC ad hoc Working Groups has strengthened dialogue, and the participatory approach can be expected to contribute to a better take-off for the EU FAP outputs. At the stage of the mid-term evaluation, it is difficult to show this influence as specific actions triggered by the EU FAP.

Key actions under Theme 1 address the economic dimension of sustainable forest management and aim at fostering the competitiveness of the sector; Economic viability is a key pillar of sustainable forest management and of crucial importance for maintaining forests and their multiple benefits to society. Improving the long-term competitiveness of the forest sector is therefore a main goal at EU level. Dissemination of the EU FAP outputs (e.g. studies, Working Group reports and recommendations, SFC opinions) to a wider group of actors is not comprehensive, but the good and well-timed outputs are available to those that need them and know where to search for them. To make the leverage of the EU FAP more efficient and effective would require wider dissemination to groups outside the organisations implementing the EU FAP, and the EU FAP outputs should in any case be disseminated to the key policy-makers and stakeholders in parallel sectors e.g. energy, environment and agriculture.

Key recommendations Theme 1:

- There should be a follow-up of the activities already carried out in the EU FAP Objective 1 during 2007-2009 making visible how the EU FAP outputs contribute to the EU and national implementation.
- In order to make the EU FAP more known, both within the forest sector and among the key policy-makers and stakeholders in parallel sectors, the awareness of the EU FAP and its outputs should be improved. For example, constant presentations on the FAP and FAP outcomes at seminars, workshops or conferences could provide a means to improve the leverage from the EU FAP to both the practitioners and to the high political level.

## **Evaluation Theme 2: enhancing and protecting the environment**

Activities enhancing and protecting the environment include information sharing in relation to international commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol and the contribution to biodiversity goals as well as development of the forest monitoring in the EU. Activities have been carried out in accordance with the EU FAP work programme.

So far the EU FAP has provided a platform for information sharing and dialogue to reach the SFC representatives of the Member States and the AGFC representatives of the stakeholders, but it is not directly a part of the EU decision-making processes. The information sharing can be expected to have an indirect impact on the positive environmental and health effects of forests required by global and international arrangements. This can be done by e.g.: increased awareness of different viewpoints regarding the forest-sector issues; increased understanding of different demands on forests; better understanding of the EU obligations and their impact by sharing experiences between the Member States on implementation of these obligations at the national level. Without better coverage of information on activities carried out in the Member States, the EU FAP does not effectively support the EU contribution to the forest-related international processes, including reporting of the EU compliance with the international commitments.

The issue of climate change has gained importance in policy discussions since the adoption of the EU FAP Key Actions and activities in 2006. This is visible in the implementation of the EU FAP as discussions carried out in 2007-2008 and as establishment of the SFC ad hoc Working Group on Climate Change and Forestry in 2008/2009. Although the work is just starting in 2009, the ad hoc Working Group is seen an effective way towards dialogue and consensus-building among different stakeholder groups. Currently the work programme of the SFC does not make explicitly the linkage between the EU FAP and discussions in the Council, where the forest related topics are handled in the Working Party on Forestry, but also in several other working parties and expert groups (e.g. relating to climate change, biodiversity, energy, development). Effectiveness of the EU FAP with regard to enhancing and protecting the environment could be improved, with a stronger link from the EU FAP to deliberations at EU and national levels.

Forest monitoring is an integral part of enhancing and protecting the environment. A fully operational European forest monitoring system is highly desired by various information providers and users and it is regarded as essential for effective and efficient policy-making at EU level. Since the Forest Focus Regulation expired in 2006, there have been no financial means for ensuring sustained maintenance of forest monitoring given that the LIFE+ financial instrument operates on a project basis. Although the European Forest Data Centre, EFDAC, and the European Forest Fires Information System, EFFIS, developed further during the EU FAP, are considered as good tools, the impact of the EU FAP on elaboration of a European forest monitoring system is modest. The EU FAP has had an indirect effect on the deliberations and policy formulation on forest monitoring and forest protection in the EU. The EU FAP has provided a platform to discuss the issue among the Member States, but the deliberations did not lead to a common position on how to proceed. The Commission White Paper on Adapting to Climate Change: Towards a European Framework for Action (COM (2009) 147) proposes to open a debate at the EU level on forest protection and forest information systems, including the issues such as monitoring, climate factors, biodiversity and the protective functions of EU forests. The EU FAP can support this process.

#### Key recommendations Theme 2:

- Stronger link from the EU FAP to the deliberations at EU and national levels should be aimed at, e.g. by linking the National Forest Programmes (NFPs) and the EU FAP more closely together. Sharing of information on implementation in the Member States should be improved by a more structured reporting to the SFC.
- Although the EU FAP is not directly linked with the EU decision-making, it can promote the work already done towards a European forest monitoring system, and it can utilise the SFC and AGFC to debate on forest protection and forest information. Further means to contribute to the debate are e.g. studies and a network of organisations. Furthermore, the Commission and the Member States should address the long-term financing of a European forest monitoring system.

### **Evaluation Theme 3: contribution to quality of life**

The importance of the EU FAP Objective 3 Contribution to Quality of Life is recognised in the feedback collected by the mid-term evaluation surveys. Nevertheless very few activities were planned for the first implementation period 2007-2009, and it is too early to assess whether and how the EU FAP has had an effect on the goal of contributing to preserving and improving the social and cultural dimensions of forests.

In the mid-term evaluation, the Member States report national activities and programmes with the aims of: enforcing environmental education; enhancing the protective functions of forests; the potential of urban/peri-urban forests. These activities are also reflected in the rural development programmes of the Member States, which provide a link with the EU FAP Objective 3. The UNECE/FAO Forest Communicators' Network (FCN) is active in forest pedagogics and in forest communication in Europe, and it has defined support for the EU FAP goals as one of its tasks – nevertheless, the role and functions of the FCN is not defined in the EU FAP work programme.

The fact that the EU FAP Objective 3 activities are starting at EU level in 2009, gives Member States and the Commission the possibility to check the focus of the Objective 3, the activities to be carried out in 2009-2011, and also the role that the Forest Communicators' Network could play in the implementation of the EU FAP. Many activities related to the EU FAP Objective 3 in the Member States are carried out at sub-national level and sharing of information on how each country has mobilised specific funding instruments (e.g. rural development programmes EAFRD, regional development programmes ERDF and the education and training programmes) could also be a valuable and constructive output to increase effectiveness of the EU FAP in contributing to quality of life. Such an exchange of information could be based on the analysis of forestry measures in the Rural Development Programmes 2007-2013 that the Commission has elaborated in 2008.

#### **Key recommendations Theme 3:**

- In order to emphasise the three sustainability dimensions and the multifunctional role of forests it is important to implement also the EU FAP Objective 3 Key Actions, and produce concrete outputs illustrating how forests contribute to quality of life. SFC should discuss how the Objective 3 will be implemented and, if needed, prioritise its Key Actions for the remaining implementation period 2009-2011.
- An information exchange could be organised within the SFC regarding the specific funding instruments which the Member States have mobilised to support the EU FAP in general and the Objective 3 in particular.

### **Evaluation Theme 4: Improving forest sector co-ordination, coherence and communication**

The EU FAP has been efficient in organising and structuring the work of the SFC, e.g. by proposing themes and topics in a multi-annual work programme, a clear timetable and regular meetings in annual work programme, calling in expertise by forming

working groups and contributing to policy formulation by opinions. The effect on policy formulation is indirect. The SFC opinions are not available publicly and it is not explicitly defined in the EU FAP the structures and mechanisms how the SFC opinions are supposed to contribute to national policy deliberations or to the initiatives and actions in the Commission. However, based on the feedback collected in the mid-term evaluation, it can be expected that there is an impact on policy processes both at EU and national levels. The SFC has been – although to a limited extent – beneficial for the co-ordination and communication between Community actions and the forest policies of the Member States. Showing concrete actions which are triggered in the Member States or as Community actions would require more than the two years of EU FAP implementation at the stage of the mid-term evaluation.

A number of countries indicate that they have utilised the EU FAP in developing their NFPs – e.g. to check the national agenda and priorities. In order to improve effectiveness, it would be important to make the connection between the NFPs and the EU FAP more visible, and share experience of NFP (or equivalent) between the Member States. Stakeholders emphasise the need for information sharing between the Member States and the stakeholders – e.g. on participatory processes in NFPs in the EU. For practical reasons, by 2009 joint meetings of the members of the SFC and AGFC and with the AC-FBI have not been arranged although this activity was planned in the EU FAP work programme. However, the Chairman of the AGFC has regularly participated in the SFC meetings.

The EU FAP has been efficient and effective in improving the mutual information sharing between Commission services on forestry issues thus contributing to better co-ordination within the Commission as well as improving the coherence between different Community actions. Coordination through the EU FAP (e.g. the SFC Work Programme providing an agenda) has also ensured structured information sharing to the SFC and AGFC. However, the need for a coherent and proactive approach to the forest sector remains: many forest sector related initiatives are prepared in parallel processes in several policy areas. In addition to the Inter-Services' Group on Forestry, there is also an Inter-Services' Group on International Forestry in the Commission. The Inter-Services' Group on International Forestry is not involved in the implementation of the EU FAP. The international processes, e.g. in relation to the climate change have recently increased the need for improved co-ordination and coherence as well as the need to review the co-ordination of the forest-related issues within the Commission.

#### Key recommendations Theme 4:

- The following measures are proposed for consideration for the remaining EU FAP period in 2009-2011 with regard to the operation of the SFC:
  - continuing with the annual work programmes of the SFC, the SFC opinions, the SFC ad hoc working groups and the studies conducted on the EU FAP issues
  - more active involvement of the Member States in the process of establishing the annual work programmes of the SFC
  - more structured reporting of Member State activities to SFC
  - means for following up and making visible how the EU FAP outputs are utilised in the EU institutions and in the Member States

- joint meetings between SFC, AC-FBI and AGFC on an ad hoc basis addressing emerging key issues where appropriate
- In order to support a broader awareness of the SFC opinions, the Commission should make the SFC opinions publicly available at the Commission forestry web-site.
- The Commission should review the tasks of the two forest-related ISGs in order to investigate how the inter-services' co-ordination could still be improved for implementation of the EU FAP.

### **Evaluation Theme 5: Dissemination of best practices and improving the visibility of the sector**

Activities in relation to the dissemination of best practices and improving the visibility of the forest sector have been carried out to a large extent as planned in the EU FAP work programme. The activity concerning the open method of co-ordination for NFPs is planned for the second period of implementation.

Use of wood and other forest products from sustainably managed forests has been encouraged in the EU FAP – e.g. by exchange of experience between the Member States. The SFC ad hoc Working Group on Public Procurement (PP) for wood and wood based-products has started its work in 2009, at a point when several Member States are planning or preparing new or revising existing PP schemes for wood. The timing gives a good basis for efficient and effective dissemination of best practices. The goal of EU FAP encouraging use of wood could be hampered by the fact that there are several sets of sustainability criteria being defined in parallel policy areas in the EU. These different sets of sustainability criteria are being defined in different policy areas, for example in energy and public procurement, and they affect the use of forest products (biomass, wood, cork, wood-based products, paper, etc.) and sustainable forest management. Sustainability criteria of forest products should be streamlined in order to avoid different requirements for management practices depending of the final use.

Although the EU FAP defines as its goal to strengthen the EU profile in international forest-related processes, the international forestry issues are not directly within the scope of the EU FAP – e.g. the preparations for the UNFCCC Conference Of Parties (COP) meeting in Copenhagen in 2009 take place in the Member States and in the EU institutions. The feedback in the mid-term evaluation shows that there are expectations for a more co-ordinated approach and presentation of the EU forest sector in the climate change negotiations. The EU FAP has been an efficient way to share information and to reach the representatives of the SFC, the AGFC and the ISG on forestry, but the effect on the international forest-related processes is indirect. Increasing globalisation and the global challenges (e.g. climate change) would require better integration of the international forest-related processes and initiatives into the EU FAP.

Measures to improve availability of forestry information have been taken (e.g. creation of the European Forest Information and Communication Platform establishing an EU forestry web-site, a public perception study). But in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the EU FAP it would be crucial to make the EU FAP better known to a

wider group of forest sector stakeholders and other sectors e.g. energy, environment and agriculture. At the moment the added value at an EU level remains to a large extent unattained: there are several parallel forest sector information and communication activities and events (such as regular forest days, forest weeks, stakeholder activities and campaigns in favour of forests and Sustainable Forest Management), but they are not linked to the EU FAP and the goals defined at the level of the EU. There are no specific financial resources earmarked at the Commission for the EU FAP communication and dissemination of the results. Without better synergy of already existing networks and efforts to improve forest communication in Europe (e.g. the national measures and the United Nations Economic Commission to Europe (UNECE)/Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Forest Communicators' Network), resources are used for individual parallel activities, but the fact that there is also an EU Forest Action Plan remains unknown to the public. Better utilisation of the existing channels for dissemination of the EU FAP outputs, in particular to decision-makers on all levels but also to the relevant key stakeholders and the general public, would also contribute to better launch of activities at the national, regional and local levels.

#### Key recommendations Theme 5:

- The SFC should discuss the challenge of the different sets of sustainability criteria that are being defined in different policy areas (i.e. energy, public procurement, etc.) and sustainable forest management practices.
- Better integration of international and EU forestry issues is needed. The SFC should trigger and coordinate the discussion of the Member States about what will happen after the EU FAP 2011, including the validity of the EU Forestry Strategy (Council Resolution of 15 December 1998) in relation to the global challenges and related ongoing processes.
- Communication and information of the EU FAP should be improved, e.g.:
  - The Commission should consider what means there are for making the EU FAP more known and more visible in the EU communication;
  - The Member States should consider how the already ongoing activities, information and communication measures at the national and sub-national level could link up with the EU FAP;
  - The Member States and the Commission should define how the Forest Communicators' Network could be better utilised in the EU FAP;
  - The Commission and the SFC in consultation with the AGFC should discuss how the forthcoming events in 2009-2011 (e.g. the International Year of Forests 2011) could be utilised to make the EU action for sustainable forest management more visible, and raise the public awareness on the benefits of forests and sustainable forest management.

#### **Evaluation theme 6: relevance of the EU FAP**

The need defined by the Council “*to strengthen coherence between forest-related EU policies and initiatives, and to enhance co-ordination within the Commission and between the Commission and the Member States*” has not changed substantially during the first two years of the EU FAP implementation. The current specific objectives, Key Actions and activities are relevant for the remaining implementation period 2009-2011,



and the mid-term evaluation gives the Member States and the Commission an opportunity to recheck the focus for the remaining years as appropriate.

The definition of the plan according to the three sustainability dimensions as EU FAP Objectives 1-3 is very relevant and provides a balanced approach to SFM. The main objectives of the FAP are also well reflected in the EU rural development policy, which is the main instrument at Community level for implementing the EU Forestry Strategy and Action Plan. The mid-term evaluation feedback shows that there can be an indirect effect from the EU FAP contributing to the national prioritisations and agenda setting. In this respect it is important that also the EU FAP Objective 3 is implemented during 2009-2011. At the national level, the NFPs cover the three sustainability dimensions with several activities, but at the moment the NFPs and measures do not efficiently connect with the EU FAP.

The EU FAP Key Actions and activities are relevant. The EU FAP and its outputs have reached the key policy-makers and the stakeholders who are directly involved in the implementation of the EU FAP, but other target groups (e.g. parallel sectors, wider groups of stakeholders) have not been reached. This hampers the relevance of the EU FAP to national and to EU level policy formulation and deliberations. Increasing the visibility of the EU FAP and its products – and later on its results – would improve the relevance of the EU FAP. Better awareness of the EU FAP also at the sub-national level would enhance the EU added value. In this respect the information and communication measures together with monitoring and follow-up of the EU FAP activities, are important to improve the relevance.

The EU FAP is based on the principle of subsidiarity and the concept of shared responsibility. Forest policy is the competence of the Member States, but the EU can contribute to the implementation of sustainable forest management through common actions. The organisational set-up of the EU FAP is adequate for the remaining implementation period 2009-2011, but the means for improving the utilisation of the existing structures (the SFC, the AGFC and the Inter-services' Groups within the Commission) should be discussed, and the link between the EU FAP and the policy formulations and decision-making at the EU level and at the national levels should be further strengthened. At the same time, it would be equally important to start discussions on the follow-up of the EU FAP after 2011, including the key elements, measures, potential financial instruments and organisational set-up of the action after EU FAP.

#### Key recommendations Theme 6:

- means for improving the utilisation of the existing structures (the SFC, the AGFC and the Inter-services' Groups within the Commission) should be discussed, and the link between the EU FAP and the policy formulations and decision-making at the EU level and at the national levels should be further strengthened. At the same time, it would be important to start discussions on the follow-up of the EU FAP after 2011, including the key elements, measures, potential financial instruments and organisational set-up of the action after EU FAP.
- Information and communication need to be strengthened to improve the leverage of the EU FAP.

### **Key recommendations for the EU FAP as a whole:**

The main recommendations of the mid-term evaluation of the EU FAP are the following:

- I. In order to show the effect of the activities already carried out in the EU FAP and the contribution that the EU FAP makes to long-term competitiveness of the forest sector, to enhancing and protecting the environment and to quality of life, it is important to arrange **follow-up and monitoring of the activities** to show how the EU FAP outputs are realised as measures by the EU institutions, by the Member States and by other stakeholders. The follow-up could be linked to already existing events, such as EU forest directors/nature directors meetings, working parties or expert group meetings, but also stakeholder activities, sub-national activities (territorial cooperation networks and activities) or e.g. research networks (COST or other actions and networks). This way the EU FAP outputs (e.g. forestry web-site studies, reports, recommendations, SFC opinions) could be **widely communicated and disseminated** to key policy-makers and stakeholders outside the groups directly involved in implementation of the EU FAP.
- II. A **stronger link between the EU FAP and the NFPs (or equivalent)** in the Member States should be sought. With better coverage of information on activities carried out in the Member States, the EU FAP could more effectively support the EU contribution to the forest-related international processes, including reporting of the EU compliance with the international commitments. The SFC should take an active role in initiating discussions on the development of concrete options for a coherent and integrated approach to sustainable forest management, including forest protection and forest information.
- III. **Regional approaches and collaborative partnerships (science-policy-practice)** in dealing with regional challenges of forest sector competitiveness, enhancement and protection of forests and contribution of forests to the quality of life should be encouraged to test good practices, foster innovation and ensure subsidiarity. Furthermore, an information exchange could be organised within the SFC regarding the specific funding instruments which the Member States have mobilised to support the EU FAP.
- IV. Discussion about the **follow-up of the EU FAP after 2011** – and the **EU Forestry Strategy** – should be started within the EU FAP framework (i.e. the SFC, the AGFC and the ISGs). Based on the feedback collected in the mid-term evaluation the following aspects are raised for consideration in the post-2011 discussions:
  - more holistic approach to forest sector issues, making it more interrelated with parallel sectors and with environmental, economic and social policies;
  - integration of the international forestry issues into the EU forestry action;
  - higher profile of the EU in international forest-related processes;

- update of the EU Forestry Strategy considering emerging issues and new challenges;
- strengthening the science-policy-practice triangle by better coordination of scientific work and utilisation of financial resources (FP7, COST, national);
- preparation of post-2013 financial instruments.

It is important that the outcome of the EU FAP mid-term evaluation is discussed in an open dialogue within the Commission, in the SFC, the Council Working Party on Forestry and in the Member States and with stakeholders in the AGFC and AC-FBI.

In order to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the EU FAP, the evaluation proposes to arrange with the Member States (SFC), the Commission (both ISGs), the AGFC and the AC-FBI discussions about the need for action with regard to the EU FAP remaining implementation period as well as the options for post-2011. This could also be an opportunity to reflect on the follow-up of the Action Plan and the update of the EU Forestry Strategy building on the work already carried out in the EU FAP approach and, as appropriate to improve the concept of the EU Forest Action Plan for the future.