

# **Report on the FAO workshop “Climate Change impacts on Forest Management in Eastern Europe and Central Asia”**

**held in Sopron, Hungary, 14-16 April 2010**

## **Objectives of the meeting**

FAO has ranked climate change as one of its priorities. The programme on forests and climate change seeks to contribute to mitigating climate change by advocating and strengthening the concept of sustainable forest management and recognizing the crucial roles of forests in climate change.

The countries in transition of Eastern Europe and Central Asia represent both politically and in ecological respect a region, where adaptation to climate change raise specific problems which have to be addressed. However, there is currently no working platform for information exchange on this particular issue and there is a lack of bilateral or regional cooperation among the countries in the region. The creation of a regional platform for cooperation was intended to address the shortage of financing and of research facilities, experts and institutions in individual countries.

To support this initiative, a workshop dealing with the climate change impacts on forest management in Eastern Europe and Central Asia has been organised by the FAO Regional Office for Europe, supported by the University of West Hungary in Sopron, Hungary, in April 2010. The best available experts and official representatives of Southeast European and Central Asian countries were invited to participate and deliver detailed country reports on the subject.

The workshop has provided a platform for the representatives of the countries to exchange information on climate change impacts on forest management, to analyse the current status of research and policies addressing issues related to forest land use and climate change in the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, with an additional emphasis on the identification of potential technical assistance.

The objectives of the initiative were to:

- Analyse the current status of national research initiatives, legal and policy frameworks, and communication developments with national experts;
- Provide a platform for the member countries to exchange information about climate change and forest management;
- Explore policy options for developing climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, taking into account national policies;
- Identify areas for potential FAO technical assistance and
- Establish a network and channels of communication for continued information exchange on climate change and forestry in Europe and Central Asia.

Prior to the workshop, 15 countries prepared and submitted a “*Review of national research, data and projects on climate change*”, in order to share their experiences, with detailed information on the following topics:

1. Summary of national publications (reports, studies, project information) on climate change dimensions, impacts
2. Status and work carried out by national research institutions on research for assessment of climate change
3. Summary list of proposals to identify possibilities for collaboration by FAO and partner organizations with national institutions and specialists.

The reports delivered by the participating countries and consolidated by the local host, Prof. C. Mátyás, are presented in this volume.

The regional workshop on “*Climate Change Impacts on Forest Management in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*”<sup>1</sup> gathered some 40 participants from 17 countries and 4 international organizations. During the 3 day consultation, the representatives of international organizations provided information to delegates about their climate change related activities and initiatives, while delegates presented their national reports, in order to provide first hand information and sufficient background to the subsequent working group discussions. The outputs of the working groups were presented by the rapporteurs to the plenary, where the participants recommended the required measures to address the regional, national and local impacts of climate change on forests in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The following conclusions and recommendations on the Eastern European and Central Asia region were reached:

1. Countries are already experiencing severe and significant impacts of climate change on their forest ecosystems, although insufficiently assessed due to lack of adequate monitoring.
2. The ecosystems of the region are extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change but countries have dedicated limited attention to the issue. Limited international assistance has been forthcoming for support for mitigation and adaptation actions.
3. Research on forests and climate change in the region is still very limited. There is some experience in the region with climate change vulnerability and impact assessments as well as with development of forest carbon projects. Opportunities exist for exchange of experiences within the region.
4. Capacities in the forestry sector in most of the countries in the region are relatively weak in relation to climate change.
5. There is a lack of awareness among policymakers, the public and forestry research on the actual and potential roles of forests in climate change adaptation and mitigation.
6. There has been limited involvement and awareness of forestry authorities in international negotiations on climate change and forestry.
7. There is a need for adjustment of national forestry policies and legislation and develop strategies in line with international obligations.

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<sup>1</sup> Detailed information available at: [http://www.fao.org/regional/SEUR/events/sopron/sopron\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/regional/SEUR/events/sopron/sopron_en.htm)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Network(s) should be developed to facilitate the sharing of information and experiences among countries in the region on forests and climate change. The establishment of a web-based platform for this purpose hosted by Turkey should be explored and a detailed proposal tabled at the ToS EECA meeting to be held in Istanbul, September 2010. (RU,TR, EN versions should be developed)
2. Countries and FAO should develop TCP projects to support the capacity of forestry professionals to develop and implement climate change strategies.
3. FAO should work with countries to seek external funding to support a regional project (or sub-regional projects) for capacity building i.e. to hold training workshops, to facilitate sharing of information and to support regional collaboration.
4. FAO should disseminate information on sources of climate adaptation and mitigation funding mechanisms and seek means to provide training on preparation of project proposals for forests and climate change.
5. FAO should assist countries to generate and disseminate awareness-raising materials on forests and climate change. The implications of international UNFCCC negotiations on countries' forests sectors and relevant opportunities should be disseminated.
6. FAO should continue to work on the development of forest monitoring and reporting methodologies related to REDD+ and to strengthen the national capacities and initiate cooperation projects to develop forest inventory methodology and forest carbon accounting.
7. FAO should raise awareness of the forestry research needs of the region related to climate change, and explore the potential of increasing research through existing forest research networks.
8. FAO should seek funds to assist countries to incorporate climate change considerations into national legislations.
9. Taking the impact of energy on climate change into account, more attention should be given to wood energy. FAO should keep wood energy expert networks informed of FAO's activities on wood energy and highlight the linkages between wood energy and climate change.
10. The country reports contributed to the SEC/SEU Joint Forestry Initiative on "*Climate Change Impacts on Forest Management in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*" should be consolidated, published and disseminated.