



Network of Regional Governments
for Sustainable Development

Working Group on Forests

Work Programme 2011 - 2012

Objectives and Expected Outcomes of the Working Group

The nrg4SD Working Group on Forests is an initiative part of a comprehensive strategy put forward by nrg4SD's Secretariat aimed to establish several working groups within the Network in order to:

- Create dynamism and enhance the "network approach" for the activities and interests of member regions, within the framework of the topics identified for work programme 2008-2011;
- Work on specific and concrete areas, aiming to position the Network in international initiatives/events and identifying project proposals for interregional cooperation, which could fall under the calls for proposals of international funding sources, as appropriate;
- Enhance the strategic vision and long-term work of the Network.

The specific objectives of the Forests WG are:

- Exchange information and experience between members on sustainable management of forests and the recognition of 'public goods', thus promoting collaboration and partnerships between members in order to contribute to an integrated approach to issues related to the recognition of public goods at all decision-making and implementation levels.
- Develop regional expertise in the matter and implementation tools (capacity building).
- Enable nrg4SD to develop expertise in forest policy and thus represent regional governments in this field at international level in the framework of the priorities identified in its work programme 2008-2012 (UNFCCC- REDD+, UNEP, UN Convention on Biological Diversity, World Water Forum?, Green Economy?, FAO).

The expected outcomes of the Forests WG are:

- Compile and bench-mark policies promoting public goods.
- Identify scientific competences in this topic and facilitate cooperation between research and transfer organisations.
- Refine methodologies for the identification of the socio-economic value of forest amenities and decline them according to the type of forest: native, harvested, for energy production.
- Contribute to the recognition of positive externalities of forests and their actual inclusion into public policy.
- Obtain international recognition of the engagement of regional governments in forest management. Therefore, produce an overview of the different issues/positions and international organisations working in this field and work towards the accreditation of nrg4SD to ECOSOC (UN Economic and Social Council) in order to participate in the work of UNFF (United Nations Forum on Forests).

Structure of the Working Group

nrg4SD working groups are intended to share a common structure: each led by a coordinating region, which is assisted by two supporting regions (one of them if possible from the South). In addition, member regions participate actively in the working group. Participant regions shall be in a position to exchange their ongoing works on the matter or demonstrate significant interest in the issue. This is also in the interest of establishing working groups with a reasonable number of members in order to allow for actual exchange and collaboration.

- The Region of Aquitaine (FR) has kindly volunteered to be the coordinating region of the Forests WG.
- So far no supporting regions have been identified. The Region of Aquitaine and nrg4SD's Secretariat for filling these vacancies.
- Member Regions: call for candidatures call for application on the basis of this draft work programme in particular for those regions concerned by the REDD+ mechanism.

It has to be underlined that this working group does not seek to achieve the largest membership possible, but it aims to create a compact group of regions working together and willing to contribute to the Network at large with technical and political guidelines for action towards the EU and UN.

Distinctive features of the Working Group

- Cross-cutting: link to the other working groups of nrg4SD¹.
- Opportunity to cooperate with other regions with experience in the matter (e.g. the European Regions partners of Aquitaine on the 'Green Book for the Protection of Forests'²)?
- Opportunity to cooperate with the International Task Force of Federated States on Climate and Forests (GCF)³, including the State of Pará.

Tools and Methods of the Working Group

The main language of the Working Group will be French as a matter of priority, but all documents will need to be translated in English (e.g. the minutes) and during the meetings of the group delegates will be free to speak French or English.

¹ International Climate Change Negotiations; Financing Climate Action; Rio +20; Water Resources; Implementation of the Plan of Action of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

² 'Associate Regions towards a strengthened European strategy on forests': common contribution from the Regions of Aquitaine, Aragon, Burgundy, Catalonia, Emilia-Romagna, Hesse, Lorraine, Midi-Pyrénées, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Tuscany. July 2010..

³ <http://www.gcftaskforce.org/> - Member Federated States : Aceh (Indonesia), Acre (Brazil), Amapá (Brazil), Amazonas (Brazil), California (USA), Campeche (Mexico), Central Kalimantan (Indonesia), Chiapas (Mexico), Cross River State (Nigeria), East Kalimantan (Indonesia), Illinois (USA), Mato Grosso (Brazil), Papua (Indonesia), Pará (Brazil), and West Kalimantan (Indonesia). Presidency for 2011: Aceh

- External and independent technical support from European and International specialised bodies – e.g. European Commission DG for Environment, United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). Collaboration could be envisaged with EFI Atlantic (IEFC - *Atlantic European Regional Office of the European Forest Institute*). All proposals for other sources of technical expertise are warmly welcomed.
- Recommended bibliography in order to prepare the meetings and allow for a common understanding and culture amongst WG members.
- Compendia or regional practices (fiches, questionnaires, presentations).
- Technical training sessions, presentations of case studies, question times with experts.
- Side events at key international dates e.g. European Green week, Energy week) and/or international events (e.g. CNUCC, Rio +20, World Water Forum, CBD).
- Feeding into the positions of the Network (SG) and its working groups as appropriate.
- The nrg4SD Secretariat is committed to explore IT solutions to facilitate the participation and involvement in the WG (video and teleconference, webinars, podcasts, etc.).

2011 - 2012 Work Programme for the Working Group

Every working group will adopt its own work programme/action plan in order to (i) outline specific objectives and identify (ii) international initiatives for lobby in favour of a subnational dimension, (iii) events where the presence or the participation of nrg4SD would be desirable, and (iv) topics of common interest on which to build project proposals for interregional cooperation, which can be eligible for European and international funding. Each work programme/action plan should nevertheless be adapted to the objectives of each working group and bear in mind the evolving character of these. A draft work programme/action plan will be put forward by the coordinating region, the two supporting regions and the Secretary General, in close consultation with the working group member regions.

Participation of experts from member Regions will be crucial for the smooth progress of the Working Group, which will involve presentations and exchange of good practices, document reading for meeting preparation, participation of regional research institutes (?), participation to the elaboration of 'political' positions/declarations presented by nrg4SD at international events.

Suggested activities for 2011:

- 29 August 2011, during nrg4SD General Assembly, Quebec, Canada – Launch meeting (joint meeting with the Working Group on Biodiversity): presentation of the working programme, proposal of activities and collaboration with UNFF and FAO.
- 21-22 October 2011, European Conference on climate change (nrg4SD-The °Climate Group), Lyon, France – First technical meeting? Intervention of an external expert?
- December 2011, UNFCCC, Durban, South Africa – Support to nrg4SD towards the development of a political position on forests in the framework of international climate change negotiations. REDD+ side event?
- 12-17 March 2012, World Water Forum, Marseille, France
- Spring 2012 – nrg4SD event on biodiversity, in collaboration with IUCN and EU Committee of the Regions.
- June 2012, Rio +20 (10th anniversary of nrg4SD) – Organisation of a side event?

This work programme proposal will be presented to Regions for information purposes before 2011 General Assembly. The final work programme may change on the basis of the needs of the Working Group and the evolving international initiatives/framework.

An active participation of the Working Group members will be vital to ensure its smooth progress.

Evolving with WG members' needs and staying tuned in:

- Within reasonable and feasible limits, the coordinating regions and the nrg4SD Secretariat will strive to adapt this work programme to the evolving needs of its members and the ongoing international initiatives of relevance to nrg4SD's mandate.
- The suggested work programme is open to any suggestion from WG members. Their active participation is vital to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of the objectives, outcomes, tools and methods of the Working Group.

Bibliography (proposal)

- Chevassu, Le Guen reports?
- + (to develop with international studies focusing on ecosystem services and public goods, e.g. TEEB study).
- Eurostat report on Forestry in Europe and the world in 2011.
- UNEP report 'Forests in a Green Economy'.
- 2011-2015 Strategy of the UN REDD Programme (un-redd.org).
- Framework for Assessing and Monitoring Forest Governance (FAO).
- FLEGT European agreements.
- Overview on the International Forest Policy – Produced by nrg4SD.

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