

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

106th meeting
Geneva, 8 July 2019

Item 8

Informal Document No. **2019/34**

Extrabudgetary project
Support for the preparation
of a legally binding agreement on forests hosted by UNECE

**UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROJECT FORM**

Project title: Support for the preparation of a legally binding agreement on forests hosted by UNECE

Expected timing/ duration: August 2019 – December 2020

Objective and brief summary of the project:

Forests play an active role in the sustainable development and well-being of societies. There is currently no comprehensive legally binding instrument on forests. Ministers responsible for forests in Europe decided to establish a regional process including an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC). The mandate for negotiations for a legally binding agreement on Forests in Europe was signed at the Sixth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe that was organized by Forest Europe (June 2011, Oslo, Norway). The negotiations of the text stalled, and no final consensus could be found by the Extraordinary Ministerial Conference (Madrid, 21 October 2015). Through a Ministerial Decision dated 6 December 2018, signatories of the Forest Europe invited the UNECE, to convene and together with FAO service jointly further negotiations on a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe by setting up a negotiating process in an appropriate format based on the parameters contained in this decision (“invite the UNECE, with the support of FAO to convene and service jointly further negotiations on a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe by setting up a negotiating process in an appropriate format based on the parameters contained in this decision”). Due to its joint nature, the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section is best placed to start negotiations on a legally binding agreement on forests in the European sub-region. The objective of this proposed project is to improve understanding of the UNECE member States on the negotiation process of a legally binding agreement on forests. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following activity:

A1.1. Providing legal advice to the UNECE member States on the process of preparing negotiations on the legally binding agreement on forests by engaging an expert legal adviser.

The legal advice will be provided in writing and in session to the Secretariat and interested UNECE member States in online consultations and during informal meetings (currently planned to be held in Geneva). The purpose of this advice is to develop the draft Terms of Reference for the negotiation process. The legal advice will be provided by an expert with extensive experience in international negotiations as well as with a deep understanding of the historical context of a possible legally binding agreement on Forests in Europe.

Based on the results of the proposed project, the draft Terms of Reference for the negotiation process will be submitted to the EXCOM for consideration, together with the draft EXCOM decision drafted by the Secretariat.

Special Note to EXCOM: The proposed project is exceptionally submitted for consideration to the 106th meeting of the EXCOM, pending the outcome of EXCOM’s deliberation on the Agenda item 7.

Expected results of the project:

EA1. Increased understanding of the UNECE member States on negotiating the legally binding agreement on forests.

Target group and beneficiaries of the project:

Beneficiaries are the UNECE member States. The main target group is ministerial-level policy makers on matters related to forests, and foreign affairs.

Justification of project and its relationship to the programme of work:

The proposed project is directly linked to the Expected accomplishments (a) “Improved monitoring and assessment of the forest sector, to support sustainable forest management” and (b) “Increased national capacity of countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-East Europe in sustainable forest management” of the Subprogramme 7 “Forestry and timber” of the UNECE Strategic framework for the period 2018-2019 and the objective of the Subprogramme 7 “Forestry and Timber” “to strengthen sustainable management of forests and enhance the contribution of forests and forest products to sustainable development in the ECE region” of the UNECE Proposed programme budget for 2020.

Estimated UN regular budget resources (work months of RB staff/level of Staff):

1 week of P3/ RB

Estimated extra budgetary resources:

Donor	Amount (EUR)
Finland	30,000

Project Manager:

Florian Steierer 11.06.2019

Section/Division:

Forestry and Timber Section/Forests, Land and Housing Division

Cleared by Programme Management Unit:

Catherine Haswell
Chief 11.06.2019

Approved by EXCOM¹

08.07.2019

¹ See paragraph 31 (a) of Commission decision A (65).

Annex
Results-based budget for the extra-budgetary project

Expected accomplishments	Planned activities	Estimated costs (EUR)
EA1. Increased capacity among member States on how to negotiate the legally text of the legally binding agreement on Forests	A1.1. Providing legal advice to the UNECE member States on the process of preparing negotiations on the legally binding agreement on forests	26,550
	1 senior international consultant/ P5 x 2.5 months x €8,700 Travel of international consultant to attend informal consultations (currently planned to be held in Geneva, Switzerland) and other relevant meetings x 4 missions x €1,200	21,750 4,800
Budget summary		26,550
13% of Programme Support Costs		3,450
Total		30,000