

Montréal Process Criteria & Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management

“Capacity building for 2003 Report”

**Montréal Process Liaison Office
Canadian Forest Service – Natural Resources Canada
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Executive Summary

The Montréal Process Working Group was formed in Geneva, in June 1994, to advance the development of internationally agreed criteria and indicators for the conservation and sustainable management of temperate and boreal forests at the national level. The origin of the Working Group dates to the International Seminar of Experts on Sustainable Development of Boreal and Temperate Forests, a conference sponsored by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) that was held in Montréal, Canada, in September 1993. Twelve countries, representing more than 90% of the world's temperate and boreal forests, as well as areas of tropical forests, have now endorsed the Santiago Declaration, subscribing to the seven criteria and 67 indicators of the Montréal Process. The Santiago Declaration and associated criteria and indicators, *Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests: The Montréal Process*, has been translated into seven languages.

The Montréal Process Working Group currently meets about once per calendar year. Since the 8th Working Group, when the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was instigated, TAC meetings have also met about once a year, usually in the opposite half of the year from the Working Group meetings. This arrangement has allowed for overall progress in the Montréal Process. During the last seven years, the Montréal Process, together with the individual country members, have produced 10 important documents, as well as information and educational material. This significant information is available through the Liaison Office or from the web site: <http://www.mpci.org>

The Montréal Process countries are currently concentrating on applying and reporting on the criteria and indicators in their own specific circumstances, and the Process is also moving to a new stage of reporting. The Montréal Process will table its First Montréal Process Forest Report at the World Forestry Congress in 2003. Over the last few meetings of both the Working Group and the TAC, guidelines, outlines and formats for both country input and the overall process report have been developed. Initial drafts of national reports are due in the Liaison Office in April 2002.

For their last meeting, the TAC developed a sample Country Report (with a selection of indicators) following the guidelines agreed to by the Working Group and using real data wherever possible to fully illustrate all parts of a Country Report. The TAC also worked with Working Group members to develop a list of indicators on which all countries expect to be able to report in their 2003 Country Reports, with a view to possible inclusion as highlights in the

“First Montréal Process Forest Report - Overview”. Further, these indicators formed the basis of discussions at a Montréal Process Working Group / TAC Capacity Building Workshop held in August 2001.

The 13th meeting of the Montréal Process will be November 26-30, 2001, in Bariloche, Argentina, with the theme of “assessment and reporting”. The Montréal Process has been focussing on the preparation of the First Montréal Process Report for a number of years. This project will come to fruition in September 2003, when the group intends to present the report to the World Forestry Congress in Québec City, Canada. Plans for beyond that date will become clearer during the upcoming 13th Working Group meeting. The questions of harmonisation and comparability among processes and also reviewing of the identified criteria and indicators will likely be addressed in the future.

The Montréal Process member countries remain firm in their commitment to implement the criteria and indicators and encourage other states with temperate and boreal forests to consider endorsing the Montréal Process criteria and indicators. Members acknowledge the work of other international initiatives regarding the development and use of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

Background to the Montréal Process

The Working Group

The Montréal Process Working Group was formed in Geneva, in June 1994, to advance the development of internationally agreed upon criteria and indicators for the conservation and sustainable management of temperate and boreal forests at the national level. The Working Group developed from the work of the International Seminar of Experts on Sustainable Development of Boreal and Temperate Forests. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) sponsored this meeting in Montréal, Canada, in September 1993.

In February 1995, in Santiago, Chile, ten countries endorsed a comprehensive set of seven criteria and 67 indicators for forest conservation and sustainable management in a statement known as the “Santiago Declaration”.

There are now twelve member countries to the Montréal Process B Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, and Uruguay. Together those countries represent more than 90% of the world's temperate and boreal forests, as well as areas of tropical forests.

The Working Group is a very transparent process and has involved observers from intergovernmental organisations, non-government organisations, parallel processes and other countries.

The Criteria and Indicators

The Montréal Process criteria and indicators apply broadly to temperate and boreal forests. They are intended to provide a common understanding of what is meant by sustainable forest management. They are intended to provide a better understanding of sustainable forest management. They also provide a common framework for assessing trends in forest conditions and management at the national level. The criteria and indicators should help to provide an

international reference for the formulation of national policies and a basis for international cooperation aimed at supporting sustainable forest management.

The approach to forest management reflected in the criteria and indicators is the management of forests as ecosystems. No single criterion or indicator alone can provide a clear picture of overall forest conditions. Taken together, the set of criteria and indicators will present a comprehensive view that can help forest managers and decision-makers in making progress toward sustainability.

The criteria and indicators should be useful in improving the quality of information available not only to decision makers, but also to the general public. This, in turn, should better inform the policy debate at national and international levels.

Given the wide range of differences in natural, physical and social conditions among the Montréal Process countries, it is recognised that application and monitoring of the criteria and indicators, as well as the capacity to apply them, will vary from country to country.

Table 1.

The "Santiago Declaration" Criteria

1. Conservation of Biological Diversity
2. Maintenance of productive capacity of forest ecosystems
3. Maintenance of forest ecosystems health and vitality
4. Conservation and maintenance of soil and water resources
5. Maintenance of forest contribution to global carbon cycles
6. Maintenance and enhancement of long-term multiple socio-economic benefits to meet the needs of societies
7. Legal, institutional and economic framework for forest conservation and sustainable management

Latest Developments

The Montréal Process countries continue to show strong commitment to cooperation in implementing the agreed criteria and indicators. They are currently concentrating on applying and reporting on the criteria and indicators in their own specific circumstances.

The Process is also moving to a new stage of reporting. Over its last few meetings, the Working Group has developed guidelines, outlines and formats for both country input and the overall process report to be published in 2003: First Montréal Process Forest Report. The Working Group also requested the TAC to undertake several activities to assist in country drafting of national reports. Initial drafts of national reports are due in the Liaison Office in April 2002.

The TAC was requested to work with Working Group members to develop a list of indicators on which all countries expect to be able to report in their 2003 Country Reports, with a view to possible inclusion as highlights in the "First Montréal Process Forest Report - Overview". At their meeting in May 2001, the TAC also continued development of the outline of "First Montréal Process Forest Report - Overview" by suggesting possible content for part 4: "Highlights on trends". Additionally, the TAC developed a sample Country Report (with a selection of indicators) following the guidelines agreed to by the Working Group, and using real data wherever possible to fully illustrate all parts of a Country Report. In order to assist countries in

preparing their country reports, the Working Group pre-approved distribution of this product before it had a chance to formally approve it. The TAC also sponsored a workshop to address the short-term technical assistance and co-operation needs identified at the 12th meeting of the Montréal Process Working Group, with a focus on developing data for specific indicator reports for the 2003 Report.

Communications

During the course of the last seven years, the Montréal Process, together with the individual country members, have produced a number of important documents, as well as information and educational material, as follows:

- *Technical Advisory Committee Reports #6, 7, and 8* (November 2000) – technical papers outlining a) some Montréal Process member country scientific experts; b) identified technical exchange and collaboration needs of Montréal Process countries; and c) examples of mechanisms for development, identification and implementation of sub-national indicators for sustainable forest management, which can be linked to national level indicators
- *Montréal Process Year 2000 Progress Report – Progress and Innovation in Implementing Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of and Boreal Forests* (April 2000) – descriptive report, which summarizes country assessments of progress in institutionalizing indicators
- *Technical Advisory Committee Reports #3, 4, and 5* (December 1999) – technical papers investigating a) possible application of internationally-agreed-upon national criteria and indicators at sub-national levels; b) issue of scale in the indicator data aggregation from sub-national to national levels; and c) opportunities for further technical co-operation and information sharing
- *Technical Advisory Committee Report #2* (March-December 2000) – technical notes designed to give further advise and guidance to the user of the criteria and indicators
- *Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests (Second Edition)* (December 1999) – second edition, with a revised preface
- *Forests for the Future: Montréal Process Criteria and Indicators* (December 1999) – brochure to convey general information about the Montréal Process to a broad public audience
- *Montréal Process First Approximation Report* (August 1997) – process report providing summary of country reports, which are assessments of ability to report on the criteria and indicators
- *The Montréal Process Progress Report* (February 1997) – descriptive report providing an updated overview of the Montréal Process
- *Technical Advisory Committee report #1* (September 1996) – report that helps clarify meanings of indicators and provides guidance to the user
- *Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests* (February 1995) – comprehensive set of criteria and indicators for forest conservation and sustainable management initially endorsed in February 1995 in Santiago, Chile, together with the statement of endorsement known as the “Santiago Declaration”

Gatherings

The Montréal Process Working Group has held a total of 12 meetings, including 6 since initially finalizing the internationally agreed criteria and indicators. The first 5 all took place within the space of a year. Since 1995, however, they have been roughly once per calendar year.

During the 8th meeting of the Working Group, the informal *ad hoc* TAC was established to provide technical advice to the Montréal Process Working Group, as requested. The TAC remains task-oriented, informal and technical in nature. It has tasks assigned at each meeting of the Montréal Process, and works inter-sessionally to address technical issues of common interest

to Montréal Process members. The TAC reports to the Montréal Process Working Group and continues to play an ongoing role in support of the Process.

Since the 8th Working Group, with the instigation of the TAC, TAC meetings have also been about once a year, and usually in the opposite half of the year from the Working Group meetings. This arrangement has allowed for overall progress in the Process.

The last meeting of the Montréal Process Working Group, its twelfth, was November 2000 in Beijing, People's Republic of China. The meeting provided an opportunity for countries to share experiences in reporting, in areas of both difficulty and success.

The Montréal Process and its member countries are currently working to produce the First Montréal Process Forest Report, which will be completed in time for the next World Forestry Congress, September 2003. The Working Group has been discussing this report since their ninth meeting, held in July 1997, in Seoul, Republic of Korea. The last Working Group meeting agreed on further steps in the production of this report and is working, with the assistance of the TAC, to develop the guidelines, outline and format for the report and also for the country input:

Table 2.

First Montréal Process Forest Report (2003)	
<i>Format for Overview Report</i>	<i>Guidelines and Format for National Reports</i>
(10-16 pages)	Total length approximately 50-65 pages
1. Executive Summary-2 pages	1. Executive Summary-2 pages
2. Introduction-1 page	2. Introduction-2-3 pages Purpose What are criteria and indicators? Scope of the report
3. Background-2 pages	3. Background-2-3 pages General description of [the country's] forests
4. Highlights on trends-7-10 pages [content to be determined]	4. Trends in National Indicators of SFM-35-50 pages [Example--Criterion 1] Introduction to Criterion 1 Indicator 1.1.a--Extent of area by forest type relative to total forest area [This format should be repeated for all other indicators.]
5. Conclusions and next steps-less than one page	5. Conclusions and next steps-2-3 pages The following discussion is suggested: Significant observations drawn from the criterion summaries. High light any priority issues. Discussion of future national work toward sustainable forest management
6. Annex-Reference to national reports and where one can find them.	

At its November 2000 meeting in Beijing, the Working Group reaffirmed that initial drafts of national reports are due to the Liaison Office in April 2002.

During the most recent meeting of the TAC, May 2001, the group worked on the following items, further to the Terms of Reference determined by the Working Group:

- Developed a list of indicators on which all countries expect to be able to report in their 2003 Country Reports, with a view to possible inclusion as highlights in the “First Montréal Process Forest Report - Overview”
- Continued development of the outline of “First Montréal Process Forest Report - Overview” by suggesting possible content for part 4: “Highlights on trends”
- Developed a sample Country Report (with a selection of indicators) following the agreed-to guidelines (outlined above), using real data wherever possible to fully illustrate all parts of a Country Report
- Considered the utility of and held a workshop to address the short term technical assistance and co-operation needs identified at the Beijing meeting of the Montréal Process Working Group with a focus on the 2003 Report

With input from each of the country representatives present, the TAC identified a short-list of indicators on which all countries will be able to report in their 2003 reports. To share experiences, particularly with respect to putting available data to the best possible use, individual countries were asked to self-identify to give short presentations on one or two of the identified indicators to the workshop of experts, which was held in Portland, Oregon, USA, in August 2001.

The “highlight” indicators that all countries can report on and that will be included as part of the Montréal Process 2003 Overview Report include one indicator from each criterion, as follows:

- 1.1a – Extent of area by forest type relative to total forest area
- 2a – Area of forest land and net area of forest land available for timber production
- 3a – Area and per cent of forest affected by processes or agents beyond the range of historic variation, e.g., by insects, disease, competition from exotic species, fire, storm, land clearance, permanent flooding, salinisation, and domestic animals [*The focus of this indicator for the Overview report will be fire.*]
- 4b – Area and per cent of forest land managed primarily for protective functions, e.g., watersheds, flood protection, avalanche protection, riparian zones
- 5a – Total ecosystem biomass and carbon pool, and if appropriate, by forest type, age class, and successional stages
- 6.5a – Direct and indirect employment in the forest sector and forest sector employment as a proportion of total employment
- 7.4b – Scope, frequency and statistical reliability of forest inventories, assessments, monitoring and other relevant information

The Capacity Building Workshop of Experts took place in August 2001. The main objectives of the workshop were to share information and experiences in the collection and reporting of Montréal Process criteria and indicators; to build country capacity for producing quality 2003 Country reports on national progress in sustainable forest management; and to facilitate consistency in reporting methods. Workshop participants included both data management specialists and individuals with national responsibility for reporting. Country presentations were planned in advance to allow for meaningful discussion. A major outcome of the workshop was the production of a set of guidelines for the seven highlight indicators to supplement the existing TAC Technical Notes. These Guidelines are intended as a technical aid to assist in interpreting and reporting of the seven highlight indicators for the 2003 Overview Report.

The next meeting of the Montréal Process Working Group will be November 26-30, 2001, in Bariloche, Argentina. With a theme of “assessment and reporting”, the meeting will focus on the following areas:

- Content of the “First Montréal Process Forest Report – Overview”
- Periodicity of future Montréal Process Forest Reports
- Preparations for or follow-up to the proposed international conference on criteria and indicators
- Capacity building
- Sample country report
- Discussion of proposed Montréal Process communications plan
- Consideration of the possible need for review at an appropriate future time of the Montréal Process indicators and related issues in light of experience gained in preparing the First Montréal Process Report
- Opportunity to hear about Argentina’s efforts in domestic implementation of the criteria and indicators

Future Plans

The Montréal Process has been focussing on preparing the First Montréal Process Report for a number of years. This project will come to fruition in September 2003, when the group intends to present the report to the World Forestry Congress in Québec City, Canada.

While concrete plans do not yet exist, it is possible the Working Group will have a meeting on the margins of this gathering of world forestry experts. This important meeting may provide the opportunity to bring together the ministers of forests from the participating countries, similar to the first meeting of the World’s forest ministers in Rome, 1995.

There may also be Working Group meetings between November 2001 and September 2003. The TAC is also likely to continue to meet to further the work on technical questions related to preparation of the reports.

While the important issue of harmonisation and comparability among processes is one that has not yet been addressed in detail by the Montréal Process, it is a question that requires further consideration. Any move toward harmonisation would have to be approached with caution in order to maintain the values of the respective schemes.

As there have continued to be questions concerning the indicators themselves, and the Working Group has agreed on a number of occasions that the indicators would not be altered until after completion of the first report, the time will likely come, sooner or later after September 2003, to review the set of indicators. With the experience of preparing the reports fresh in the minds of country representatives, they should be well-prepared to bring that experience to bear on improving, if it is determined to be necessary, the set of criteria and indicators.

The Montréal Process Working Group and the TAC recognize the significance of their work in the global context. They recognize that it is important to continue to make progress and demonstrate to others around the world how countries from different regions and eco-regions can work together to report on their forests. They also recognize that they can report both together and separately on the agreed common framework of criteria and indicators of sustainable management and conservation of forests.

The Montréal Process member countries remain firm in their commitment to implement the criteria and indicators and encourage other States with temperate and boreal forests to consider endorsing the Montréal Process criteria and indicators. Members acknowledge the work of other international initiatives regarding the development and use of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.