

INDICATORS OF SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY

Indicators

1. The Forestry Commission plans to publish a set of UK Indicators of Sustainable Forestry towards the end of 2001. This is planned to be a similar style of publication to "Towards Sustainable Agriculture – A Pilot Set of Indicators" (MAFF, February 2000). It could contain around 30-40 indicators of the economic, social and environmental impacts of forestry in the UK.

2. These national-level indicators will provide information about the current state, and trends over time, of woodlands and their management. They would monitor forestry's contribution to sustainable development, expanding upon the forestry indicators in "Quality of Life Counts" (DETR, December 1999). They would also form part of the programme of monitoring of sustainable forest management, as outlined in the UK Forestry Standard (FC, January 1998), but there is now an opportunity for the indicators to evolve from those set out in the Standard.

3. Where possible, the Indicators of Sustainable Forestry will also give data for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which can be used as indicators for the country Forestry Strategies, alongside other indicators that are more directly linked to specific objectives and actions in the Strategies.

Consultation

4. The Forestry Commission is now starting the first round of external consultation on these indicators. It is primarily aimed at experts in the subject areas to be covered by the indicators, seeking views that are technical rather than political. It particularly seeks views on:

- What should be included in indicators of sustainable forestry for the UK?
- Are there any other relevant and important indicators?
- Which indicators would require further development?
- What other data sources exist?

5. This document is being sent to individuals suggested by the Forestry Commission staff and others, and is also being placed on the Forestry Commission website www.forestry.gov.uk, inviting widespread participation in the development of these indicators. Recipients can participate in two ways:

- By participating in a workshop in Bromsgrove on 16 May 2001
- By responding before and/or after the workshop, by 30 June 2001.

6. If you are interested in participating in this workshop, please complete the response form with your contact details, and send it to any of the addresses below. The workshop will be limited to 50 participants, and the initial selection of participants will be made from those who respond before 18 April (to any of the addresses below); we expect that most (or all) applicants will be able to be accommodated. We will then send confirmation and further information (or notification to those that we are not able to be accommodate). If places remain available, we may be able to accept later responses (until 2 May).

7. Comments on the development of the indicators can be sent by post to Economics & Statistics Unit, Forestry Commission, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh, EH12 7AT, by fax to 0131 316 4344, or by email to statistics@forestry.gsi.gov.uk. Any questions about the consultation can be directed to Simon Gillam (0131 314 6280) or Paul Smith (0131 314 6475).

8. The draft will then be distilled down to a set of 30-40 indicators, each of which will be presented in the proposed style for publication, taking account of the views expressed in the workshop and other responses. This draft publication will then be subject to consultation; it will be sent to all those who contributed to the earlier development, and again placed on the FC website, inviting any comments by October 2001. The draft publication will then be revised, ready for publication at the end of 2001.

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