

Opportunities for Further Technical Co-operation and Information Sharing Among Montréal Process Countries

Paper accepted by the Montréal Process Working Group
November 29, 1999
Charleston South Carolina, USA

Background

1. The Montréal Process established a set of 7 criteria and 67 indicators in its 'Santiago Declaration' in 1995.
2. Many of the Montréal Process countries prepared their 'First Approximation Report' for the 9th meeting of the Working Group in 1997. All countries experienced some level of difficulty in reporting against at least some criteria - even though the average reporting rate for the 7 criteria was 87%, only 39% of indicators were reported in detail in the 'First Approximation Report' of the Working Group in 1997. The reasons for the difficulties varied, but included:
 - Problems interpreting some indicators
 - Lack of clarity about the scientific underpinning of some indicators
 - Problems identifying sources of information
 - Problems in summarising information in meaningful ways at the national level
 - Lack of data for some indicators
 - Lack of scientific, institutional and political capacity to support reporting activities.
3. The responses of countries to these issues have been various. They have included a range of actions within countries such as:
 - new data collection activities
 - new research targeted at developing scientific bases for indicators
 - development of regional (sub-national) sets of indicators
 - development of management-level sets of indicators
 - review of institutional arrangements for dealing with criteria and indicators.
4. Montréal Process countries have been involved in many recent international capacity building activities. For example:
 - China - Australia - CIFOR C&I workshop, Fuzhou, December, 1997
 - an informal meeting of MP and other countries that addressed the opportunities for future co-operation to help countries to implement indicators and respond to the demands of 'Montréal Process' reporting. This meeting followed the IUFRO Conference on Sustainable Forest Management, Melbourne, August, 1998, and was sponsored by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, the Chinese Academy of Forestry and

several Australian government agencies. A summary is at [Attachment A](#) and formed the basis for the present report.

- the 'International Consultation on Research and Information Systems in Forestry' meeting in Gmunden, Austria, September, 1998 (ICRIS 1998),
- the 'International Experts Meeting on the Role of Planted Forests in sustainable Forest Management' meeting in Santiago Chile, April 1999, and
- attendance at the MP Technical Advisory Committee meetings, where cost sharing between developed and developing countries has made critical attendance possible.

Issue

5. Countries, especially developing countries, have indicated that their full participation in reporting on criteria and indicators is significantly limited by their technical capacities in C&I activities. The 10th Meeting of the Working Group began to address these issues by requesting the TAC to report on opportunities for technical co-operation and information sharing.

Approaches

6. Opportunities for further technical co-operation and information sharing among Montréal Process countries can be approached in several ways. The following report discusses recommendations of the informal meeting of Montréal Process and other countries (Melbourne 1998) under the six headings provided by the Working Group in its Terms of Reference to the TAC.

Training and Workshops

7. A major hurdle for many countries has been to develop initial capacity to understand, interpret and organise data collection and reporting. Applying the Montréal Process C&I and the reports of the TAC are sometimes difficult. Experience from the China-CIFOR-Australia workshop in December 1997 demonstrated the success of dealing with C&I issues in a bi-lateral setting, with assistance from international agencies such as CIFOR. ...] The goals and outcomes of this kind of project are different from those of multilateral international meetings. The informality of discussion and the primary focus on the needs of just one country allow rapid and in-depth analysis and resolution of the specific needs of that country. This approach complements the broader multilateral meeting approach, which tends to be more formal and to only address the general issues.
8. However, multilateral workshops can also contribute to effective information exchange. Under the auspices of the IUCN, the US Forest Service and the Canadian Forest Service, the South American member countries of the Montréal Process (Argentina, Chile and Uruguay) met in Bariloche, Argentina, in April 1997 to study how to strengthen South American participation in the process.

Scientific Networks

9. A short report could be produced that lists the range of international scientific networking that countries currently use to exchange information about C&I. The list could be organised by one member country with input from all others. The report would cover known organisations, networks including email and 'web' contacts. The

results would be made available to all members and could then serve to assist countries to make better or new links with scientists working in C&I.

10. A first working draft was organised at the 3rd TAC meeting in Montevideo, May, 1999, and should be available to the Working Group at its 11th meeting in November, 1999 (see [Attachment C](#)). This work is consistent with the Recommendation (iv) of the ICRIS (1998) meeting '...to strengthen research networks to "fast track" capacity development...'
11. There are several criteria and indicator processes and activities active internationally at present. They are fairly geographically discrete, although some countries belong to more than one and some are not country based for example FAO, CIFOR and ITTO.
12. There is room for ongoing sharing of information about which indicators appear to work best and which ones are not performing well. Sharing information on issues currently being researched and on those where research results are now available can greatly accelerate the spread of the adoption and use of effective indicators. Periodic, formal exchanges of information on the progress with implementing reporting between the various processes would also assist with a longer term goal of standardising what and how to report on sustainable forest management.
13. The Montréal Process Working Group should work to ensure that representatives from other processes are invited to MPWG meetings and vice versa. Technical observers from other processes should be invited to attend technical meetings in order to facilitate the exchange of information. Such actions would help develop co-operation between related processes. For some years to come, such sharing activities will help develop commonality more effectively than sudden directives to change.

Translations

14. At present there are at least 7 languages spoken officially by the 12 Montréal Process countries. Documents tend to be produced first in English. Documents are translated into the two agreed languages (Spanish and French). Individual countries undertake other translations.
15. In the case of the Spanish speaking countries, where there are several countries involved, it could assist the spread of the official information if these countries could co-ordinate the translation into a basic Spanish version. This could then be modified to match the particular linguistic and cultural needs of each country.

Email and Internet

16. The Montréal Process Working Group has established a web home page. It has links to each Member country's key page(s) that relate to C&I. Each country would be responsible for maintaining its own information as up to date as possible. To facilitate the rapid development of country C&I web sites, a guide to the basic content of a country home page is at [Attachment B](#).
17. The national web sites should maintain data and reports on each country's C&I activities as well as links to other Montréal Countries C&I web sites. This inter-connection would permit the sharing of information on progress with implementation. The choice of language to use on each country's home page should reflect the

expected primary users. Thus a country's own national language(s) should be the primary one to make the site most useful to that country, though English should be considered for an international user group.

18. A Discussion Group on the internet would allow countries (or individual scientists) to post questions or requests for help which would be immediately circulated to others who might be able to help. These systems can work very effectively to stimulate the interchange of information, methods, and results between workers. Such sites often work best if there is a neutral overseer who ensures that the system functions smoothly, but who does not inhibit the flow of information.
19. The central Montréal Process web-site and each country's complementary web-site should consider having a "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ) page. Organising the contents and their updating are details that would need to be considered.

Demonstration Projects for Testing

20. This report does not propose specific demonstration projects. Such projects can be effective, but they should come out of the collaborative work noted below or be the focus of specific funding projects. Such projects could have a single country focus, or could be organised through co-operative arrangements between like-minded countries with similar problems.
21. To be most effective in assisting countries to increase the rate of implementation of indicator reporting, demonstration projects should consider how the geographic and cultural issues facing the diversity of member countries can best be served by demonstrations.

Technical Collaboration

22. The Montréal Process countries should continue to facilitate projects where countries indicate that they want assistance and where there are countries able to provide it. Funding for such activities is not large, but is nonetheless significant. Additional sources of support need to be identified if technical collaboration is to occur in a timely manner to match the immediate needs of countries. There may be opportunities to seek assistance from international funds. A co-ordinated formal approach from the Montréal Process Working Group is an option that should be presented to the next meeting of the Working Group.
23. There is an opportunity for the Montréal Process Working Group to prepare and send a co-ordinated request for financial assistance to international agencies known to support work on sustainable resource management. One option is to prepare a single large proposal addressing the needs of primarily developing countries within the Montréal Process Working Group. However, the great diversity of needs and cultures within the Group indicates that either several smaller proposals should be prepared or the larger proposal should be subdivided into regions.
24. To succeed, the proposal should build on the comprehensive coverage social benefits that can come from the earliest establishment of sustainable forest management systems and reporting structures, and the efficiency of addressing the issues through the existing co-ordinating mechanism, which the Montréal Process Working Group represents.

25. If the activities noted above are established, then there will be a continuous flow of information to managers at all levels about what works and what needs further work before being useable. There is increasing emphasis on the need to focus on indicators that make sense at the FMU level, and not just at the national level. Ensuring that there is clear linkage between the different levels of reporting within countries is important to keep the costs of data gathering and analysis to a minimum.
26. Montréal Process countries are encouraged to share with each other the processes and mechanisms they develop to effect the implementation of criteria and indicators. Such sharing may accelerate the rate of uptake of criteria and indicators where otherwise limited action would occur because of a lack of understanding of how to do the task. Using any of the mechanisms noted above, such as scientific networks, web-sites, meetings and publications, could facilitate the process of implementing criteria and indicators of the conservation and sustainable management of forests.
27. An outline of possible approach is included at [Attachment B](#).

Summary

28. Opportunities exist for further technical co-operation between countries to facilitate the implementation of criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management. These opportunities exist at different levels, amongst different stakeholders and using different techniques. Broadly the proposed opportunities fall into information sharing, communication, direct capacity building (including for technical, political, policy, institutional, and private stakeholders).
29. The seven areas outlined here include the identification of existing scientific networks, the use of electronic mail (email) networks, bilateral and multi-lateral projects, translation of key documents into languages other than English, co-ordinated approaches to funding capacity building, extend co-operation between C&I processes, and sharing of information on how to implement C&I at the sub-national level. The six areas outlined here include training and workshops, scientific networks, translation of key documents, use of email and internet links, demonstration projects and technical co-operation.

Recommendations

30. The Montréal Process Working Group should approach one or more international funding bodies seeking financial support to facilitate urgently needed capacity building among the many members to allow them to adequately develop and report on indicators of sustainable forest management.
31. The contact list prepared by the Technical Advisory Committee and presented here as [Attachment C](#) should be accepted by the Working Group and promulgated widely by the Secretariat and each individual country.

Attachment A

Summary of the Criteria and Indicator Workshop

1. A workshop was held in Melbourne on 31 August to 2 September 1998, following the International Union of Forestry Research Organisations (IUFRO) International Conference on Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). The workshop was jointly organised by the Department of Primary Industries and Energy and its Bureau of Resource Sciences, the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and the Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment and the Chinese Academy of Forestry.
2. The objective of the workshop was to accelerate progress on implementation of criteria and indicators through capacity and confidence building.
3. Nineteen participants from eleven countries, principally from Montréal Process countries, attended the workshop. Participants from each country provided a summary of progress to date on implementation of sustainable forest management, criteria and indicators and related national issues. A list of participants is at Attachment A. Representatives from the Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment provided participants an excellent overview of the Statewide Forest Resource Inventory as well as innovations to conventional inventory and their work on volume modelling.
4. A number of issues were discussed and key outcomes are summarised below.

IUFRO conference

5. The workshop summarised and highlighted the following conference outcomes:

- 5.1** SFM is a dynamic concept that is based on national circumstances
- 5.2** criteria and indicators provide a common language, however, there is a need for clarification of terminology
- 5.3** criteria and indicators have different relevance and use at different scales
- 5.4** there is a need for testing how the indicators relate to the understanding of sustainability
- 5.5** there is a need to engage social scientists to assist with the social aspects of criteria and indicators
- 5.6** identification of social values is a prerequisite step in the development and application of criteria and indicators

6. The workshop highlighted that the IUFRO World Congress in year 2000 provides an unique opportunity for the Montréal Process to share progress on criteria and indicator issues internationally.

Application of criteria and indicators on public and private lands

7. The workshop noted that there are differences among countries in their ability to collect information from private land, and that there was a need to clarify how information can be collected and used across multiple ownerships.

Linkages between national and sub-national/Forest Management Unit level indicators

8. The workshop prepared a paper for the consideration of the Working Group ([Attachment B](#)) which includes a number of recommendations for future work for the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

Expected developments — Montréal Process reporting

9. The workshop discussed options for future reporting by the Montréal Process and has recommended that the Working Group consider an option to report by the year 2000 (see [Attachment C](#)).

Future Co-operation

10. The workshop discussed possible future co-operation and identified the following opportunities for the Working Group:

- 10.1** identify existing scientific networks and formalize some form of contact
- 10.2** establish e-mail networks and utilize Internet facilities (involves certain level of overhead to establish and maintain sites)
- 10.3** bi-lateral and multi-lateral activities/projects (informal and formal)
- 10.4** facilitate review of translation to other languages more effectively (e.g., Spanish speaking countries to collectively review Spanish translation)
- 10.5** explore the option of the Liaison Office coordinating capacity building and training programs (e.g., possible funding through larger organizations)
- 10.6** maintain and enhance, if necessary, co-operation with other criteria and indicators and related processes
- 10.7** share sets of guidelines and relevant indicators to assist forest managers implement elements of SFM at the FMU level

Attachment B

Guideline for the basic content of country Home Pages for Criteria and Indicators

- Identify country and the purpose of the web site
- Provide an index with hot links to the main sections of the site
- B7 Contact names and addresses for the Montréal Process Working Group member and the country representative on the Technical Advisory Committee
- A copy of the Santiago declaration, or a hot link to the document at another site such as the MP home page (www.mpci.org)
- Copies of technical reports, meeting reports, FAR report and other C&I national reports produced by the country
- A contact list for key C&I research, industry, and policy people who could assist with relevant local inquiries
- Hotlinks to other MP sites and related C&I sites.

Attachment C

Contact list of major Criteria and Indicator organizations, agencies and individuals

See [Web site](#).

Attachment D

Guidelines for possible approaches to international funding agencies

1. The approach should be based on the particular strengths that the Montréal Process group of countries brings to the global problems of sustainable forest management:

- 60% of the world's forests
 - ability to reach a wide diversity of ecological, social, cultural and economic issues representative of a wide cross-section of the world's systems that currently control the condition and sustainability of forests.
2. The approach should clearly identify the nature of the problems to be solved, the countries that will participate, which, if any, major forest research organization will be involved. The breadth of the projects should not be so wide that the results cannot be realistically achieved, that is, don't try to resolve all problems at once.
 3. The expected benefits, who will gain them, how will the results be transmitted to those who can use them.
 4. The proposals should outline the full costs of the work, how much the recipient countries will contribute as cash and as in-kind, whether there are other country partners who will assist, and how much support is needed from the funding agency.
 5. The time frame for the project needs to be clearly indicated with major milestones during the course of the project clearly identified.
 6. The project should include clear statements of support from the appropriate forestry agencies for the project and a clear intention to use the findings if they are appropriate.