Terminology Activities at IUFRO

Renate Prüller[1], Michèle Kaennel Dobbertin[2]
[1] IUFRO Secretariat – SilvaVoc, c/o Federal Forest Research Institutev, Seckendorff-Gudentweg 8, A-1131 Vienna, Austria.
prueller@forvie.ac.at
[2] Swiss Federal Research Institute WSL, CH-8903 Birmensdorf, Switzerland
kaennel@wsl.ch

Abstract
The International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO) is a non-profit, non-governmental international network of forest scientists. IUFRO now has approximately 15,000 co-operating member scientists in over 700 member institutions from more than 100 countries. In short succession, SilvaVoc, IUFRO's service unit on multilingual forest →terminology at the Secretariat, and the IUFRO Working Party 6.03.02 "Trends in forest terminology" have been created to address terminological issues. As the co-ordinators of these initiatives, we believe that our activities are mutually beneficial and complementary.
SilvaVoc was conceived to continue IUFRO's traditional activities in forest →terminology. It represents a clearing-house for terminological activities within the IUFRO Secretariat, and offers consultation and database services. In a first phase it focussed on *compiling information and meta-information* on existing terminological publications in forestry. At present its activities emphasise co-operation with the IUFRO structure and Japan, e.g. for the publication of a multilingual *Terminology of Forest Management Planning*, and on other thematic studies on forest genetic resources and agroforestry. In parallel, the IUFRO Working Parties are invited to contribute to the *terminological database* managed by SilvaVoc.
Working Party 6.03.02 "Trends in forest terminology" relies on a network of experts in forest-related fields in the broadest sense, including for example forest economists and sociologists, as well as terminologists. These experts contribute to a *terminological watch* for the early identification of emerging forest-related issues, inventory terminological divergences and discuss them within *thematic electronic discussion groups* and maintain a *terminological hotline* for telematic-based terminological assistance.
The activities of both initiatives aim at ensuring the high quality and continuity of →terminology work in forestry within IUFRO. We intend to point out terminological differences rather than concealing them. We follow descriptive rather than prescriptive principles, focus on co-operation from the many forestry experts of the IUFRO structure and include all languages.

Keywords: IUFRO, SilvaVoc, forest terminology, terminology management, terminology database, network, bibliography, telematic-based assistance

1 Introduction

The International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO) is an important organisation, in size as well as in its relevance to the international forestry community. It has over 15,000 co-operating member scientists in over 700 member institutions from more than 100 countries. The scientific activities of IUFRO's members are channelled through eight Divisions. Each Division comprises a number of Research Groups that span the fields of science covered by the Division. Generally, each Research Group has one or more Working Parties. There are presently 63 Research Groups and 197 Working Parties.

Not only is IUFRO big, it is also old. The Union celebrated its centenary in 1992. Thus IUFRO has tradition, and it should be emphasised that IUFRO has a tradition in →terminology work, with for example a joint FAO/IUFRO Committee on Forestry Bibliography and Terminology established already in 1903.

Our initiatives, both of which address terminological issues, represent a continuation of this tradition: SilvaVoc[1], IUFRO's project on multilingual forest →terminology, operates from the IUFRO Secretariat, while Working Party 6.03.02 "Trends in forest terminology" is based within the IUFRO structure described above. We believe that our activities are mutually beneficial and complementary. The purpose of this paper is to present IUFRO's activities in forest →terminology and to explain how our activities are interrelated and pro-active. In a third part, we will describe the common principles of our activities.

2 SilvaVoc at the IUFRO Secretariat

In early 1995, priority was given to the expansion of →terminology work at IUFRO. A framework was needed to provide support and generate activities in this field, from global projects such as a revision of Ford-Robertson's *Terminology of forest science, technology, practice and products* – which is now completed (Helms, this volume) – to small-scale projects such as compiling short mono- or multilingual →glossaries. SilvaVoc was therefore conceived as a service unit within the IUFRO Secretariat in Vienna and as a clearing-house for terminological activities in forestry.

SilvaVoc's objectives are:
-   to provide bibliographical and consultation services about forest →terminologies and terminological activities;
-   to contribute to the harmonisation and integration of existing and future terminological data;
-   to make compiled and quality-controlled data available in electronic form, e.g. in terminological databases;
-   to produce special →glossaries for specific target groups, in an appropriate medium of publication.

2.1 Clearing-house for Information and Documentation

This activity reflects SilvaVoc's vocation as a service provider. It was designed to offer accurate and up-to-date information on all types of terminological publications in forestry as a basis for work on →terms and →definitions.

This major effort has already resulted in the publication of the *International Bibliography of Forest Dictionaries, Glossaries and Terminological Publications* (1997). Some of the documents are available for consultation in the SilvaVoc library.

Since August 1997, the *Bibliography* has been available online and searchable on the SilvaVoc World Wide Web (Web) Homepage[2]. The file is regularly updated and enlarged with additional references. At present, we are including hyperlinks to publications available on the World Wide Web.

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[1] From silva = forest, and voc = vocabulary.
[2] SilvaVoc: `<http://iufro.boku.ac.at/iufro/silvavoc/pusv.htm>`

2.2 Co-operation with the IUFRO Structure

A major aim of SilvaVoc was to take advantage of the global network of forestry experts and to encourage →terminology work within the IUFRO structure. Experts in forestry and other fields should participate according to the principle "experts work on their own technical language".

Users of the SilvaVoc clearing-house and database play an important role in contributing data and correct →definitions of →terms. IUFRO scientists are invited to express subject matter priorities, to advise within their areas of expertise, to help with →definition of →terms, to assist with the evaluation and correction if necessary of submitted →terms and to suggest →terms to be included in the database.

A first result of this co-operation is the *Terminologie der Forsteinrichtung* [*Terminology of Forest Management Planning*] (1998), a collection of around 800 German →terms and →definitions with equivalent →terms in seven languages (English, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Hungarian and Japanese). Corresponding versions with main entries and →definitions in the other IUFRO official languages[3] will be published soon.

In co-operation with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), a comparative study was carried out in 1997 on →terms related to the Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) (PRÜLLER 1997) and a →glossary on forest genetic resources is currently being compiled. A collaboration with the IUFRO Working Parties on agroforestry has been launched.

2.3 SilvaTerm, a Terminological Database

→Terminology work is a permanent but evolving process. →Definitions that are accurate today may be out-of-date or different tomorrow. In a terminological database, revisions and changes can be easily documented.

Thanks to co-operation with the International Society for Environmental Protection (ISEP), SilvaVoc was in a position to design a terminological database on Access, called SilvaTerm. This database is compatible with those used within the framework of the European Environment Agency (see Budin, this volume) and in a current project with the United Nations office in Vienna.

At present, SilvaTerm includes data from a trilingual forestry →vocabulary (YERKE 1995) produced as a project of the North America Forest Commission of the FAO (NAFC FAO) and sample →definitions from the IUFRO *Terminology of Forest Management Planning* (1998). These data are mainly →terms and equivalent →terms in English, French and Spanish, with references to sources and an indication of the subject fields, but with only a few →definitions. The decision to include these →terms, even with the few →definitions, was taken deliberately. →Definitions will be added as we receive them from the IUFRO Working Parties, whose contributions are requested regularly through the IUFRO Newsletter and through personal invitations to officers of specific Working Parties.

A test version of SilvaTerm is available online at the IUFRO Web Homepage.

2.4 Co-operation with Japan

Sponsorship from Official Development Assistance (ODA) Japan was possible through a very constructive co-operation with Japanese forest scientists. This takes the form of information on →dictionaries and →glossaries in Japanese, the participation of around thirty experts in the

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[3] IUFRO's four official languages are: English, French, German and Spanish.

establishment of the Japanese part of the Terminology on Forest Management Planning, and interest in a Japanese parallel version of the *Terminology of Forest Science, Technology, Practice and Products* (FORD-ROBERTSON 1971).

The representation of Japanese Kanji characters in western computer environments still poses some difficulties but several solutions are being considered (Matsumoto and Tsuyuki, this volume).

3 Trends in Forest Terminology – a IUFRO Working Party

A year after the formation of SilvaVoc, the creation of a new Working Party on "Trends in Forest Terminology" (WP 6.03.02) in January 1996 confirmed IUFRO's concern over termi-nological issues. Unlike most IUFRO Working Parties, WP 6.03.02 relies on the *whole* network of IUFRO member scientists. As such, it is similar to the Task Forces created by IUFRO to address inter-disciplinary issues. In addition to forestry, forest ecology and related disciplines, the participation of experts in for example sociology, history and →terminology is encouraged.

Activities within WP 6.03.02 are a service offered both *to* its members and *from* its members to the international community. They mainly focus on a Directory of Experts and on thematic electronic discussion groups.

3.1 Directory of Experts

The rationale behind the Directory of Experts is twofold:
– the most up-to-date and reliable source of terminological information is often the knowl-edge of field experts;
– it is usually difficult to identify the right expert at the right moment, *and* to make sure that this expert is willing to provide assistance.

A directory of experts volunteering to provide terminological assistance to their peers, to →terminologists or to translators has therefore been compiled. It was made available on the Web as a searchable database in August 1996. By searching the database by field of expertise, language, country or name, users identify the expert(s), who can be contacted by telephone, fax or e-mail. As of December 1998, 101 experts have registered, representing 17 languages and 26 countries. Calls for participation are sent once or twice a year to new sets of experts, identified from the current scientific literature, from searches on the Web, or from other sources.

This service is free to all, but users are asked to send a short summary of questions and answers to the WP 6.03.02 co-ordinator. It was initially planned to archive all questions and answers on the Web, where they would be available to other users. This feedback was also expected to help in estimating the number of users. However, the feedback rate has been very low so far. The answers to a questionnaire sent to all registered experts in early 1998 confirmed that very few users had actually contacted these experts. This was all the more surprising as many experts had been reluctant to register for fear that they would receive too many requests.

3.2 Electronic Discussion Groups

Thanks to the commitment of WP 6.03.02 deputy co-ordinator, Brian Haddon, from Natural Resources Canada in Ottawa, a procedure was defined for setting up temporary ad hoc mailing lists using the Natural Resources Canada server. Such mailing lists can be launched within a few days whenever a →concept or a set of →concepts needs expert consultation. WP 6.03.02 provides the technical support and maintenance.

The lists can be moderated either by WP 6.03.02 officials or by the expert who suggested the discussion topic. Their lifetime is determined by the moderator and should remain relatively short (less than 6 months). Participation may be either open or restricted to a small group of individuals invited by the moderator.

So far three →concepts or broad themes have been discussed: old-growth forests, reforestation, afforestation and deforestation, and low-cover forests.

3.2.1 Old-growth Forests

During the first semester of 1997, the OLDGROWTH List was established to explore the →concept of *old-growth forests*, together with *natural forests*, *primary forests*, *virgin forests*, and other related →concepts. It was moderated by Brian Haddon, deputy co-ordinator of WP 6.03.02. The primary objective of this discussion group was to provide a forum for people around the world to make others aware of the →concept of *old-growth forests* as it exists in their part of the world, and the different factors that affect their thinking. One of the conclusions was that "there are key differences in the →definition of *old-growth forests* and its relationship to related →terms like *virgin forests* and *primeval forests*. The differences in →definition are usually related to differences in the objectives for defining and identifying old-growth forests around the world." (HADDON 1997).

3.2.2 Reforestation – Afforestation – Deforestation

Unlike the OLDGROWTH List, the Reforestation – Afforestation – Deforestation (RAD) List was launched to address a specific terminological need expressed in an official context. The Third Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) held 1–11 December 1997 in Kyoto, Japan, called for, among other things, the reporting on emission sinks resulting "from direct human-induced land use change and forestry activities, limited to afforestation, reforestation and deforestation since 1990." The FCCC Secretariat called for clarification of the use of these →terms in various parts of the world (LUND 1998). This task was taken over by H.G. Lund, an international consultant in forestry, who set up the Reforestation – Afforestation – Deforestation (RAD) List at the end of May 1998. The purpose of this List was to provide a platform for collecting and discussing →definitions of these three →concepts as used worldwide, as well as basic related →concepts such as *forest*, *land use* or *plantation*.

Within the six-month period of operation of the list, over 130 →definitions of *forest* and *forest land*, 31 of *tree*, 34 of *afforestation*, and 39 each for *deforestation* and *reforestation* were sent by representatives of 31 countries. The →definitions are presented and discussed in a document available online (LUND 1998a).

3.2.3 Low Forest Cover

The Low Forest Cover (LFC) List was operated for only one month, and moderated by H.G. Lund at the request of the IUFRO Secretariat, following an agreement between IUFRO and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) had identified countries of low forest cover as being of special concern. A →definition applicable to all countries and suitable for use in the Forest Resource Assessment in the year 2000 had then to be worked out.

One of the main conclusions of the moderator's report (LUND 1998c) is that more information is needed about the purpose of the →definition. Various technical →definitions may be produced depending on the purpose. In addition, applying a →definition may indeed allow decision-makers to take action internal or external to a country when forest cover is deemed to be "low" for this country (LUND 1998c).

3.3 Perspectives for Working Party 6.03.02

Short-term discussion groups on →concepts and well-delimited issues have proved to be useful so far, and this service should be continued in the next IUFRO term (2000–2004).

While the relevance of the Directory of Experts has not been questioned, efforts need to concentrate on improving the user-friendliness of the search interface and on marketing. The Directory has been advertised once a year since 1996 on electronic discussion lists for translators, terminologists and foresters. Other potential user circles still need to be identified, particularly in educational and research institutes.

WP 6.03.02 originally proposed to act as a "terminological watch" relay station, where IUFRO officers and other users could report for example →neologisms or paradigm shifts. →Neologisms would then be forwarded to relevant focus centres and/or discussed within thematic discussion groups. This service has been inactive, and will be dropped in the next IUFRO term.

Needs for new activities will certainly emerge, especially as →terminology is becoming more visible, within and outside IUFRO.

4 Principles Common to Both Initiatives

Traditionally IUFRO's role in →terminology has been to make people aware of terminological differences rather than to conceal them[4]. The approach is therefore based more on descriptive than prescriptive principles; e.g. instead of aiming primarily at recommending →definitions, it is our concern to point out differences in the use of →terms. Nevertheless a standard →terminology may be the result of this approach.

As IUFRO's activities involve multilingualism, →terminology work within IUFRO includes all languages, but with a focus on the four IUFRO languages. Most of the work is naturally being done in English and for the discussion groups the working language is English, but input in or about other languages is most welcome.

In forestry as in other fields, the participation of experts (in this case from forestry) is essential for the work on forest →terminology. Both initiatives are therefore based on co-operation between the many forestry experts represented in the IUFRO structure.

5 Conclusion

At their own scale, terminological activities within IUFRO reflect the Union's guiding principles: they rely on a network of experts and contribute to the development of this network, including disciplines not closely related to forestry, they promote international co-operation, and they involve collaboration with other NGOs.

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[4] Cf. *Good terminologies reveal differences; bad ones conceal them* (Ford-Robertson 1971).

As globally co-ordinated forest research becomes a priority in the context of sustainable management and global change, the need for concerted action in →terminology will increase. Partners from various geographical and institutional backgrounds will have to base their collaboration on common →definitions. They will also need to avoid duplicating terminological efforts. Together, SilvaVoc and WP 6.03.02 can significantly contribute to this collective effort by consolidating the network, resources and expertise they have built since 1995.

6 References

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7 Related Web Pages

– International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO)
  <http://iufro.boku.ac.at/>

– SilvaVoc
  <http://iufro.boku.ac.at/silvavoc/>

- IUFRO Working Party 6.03.02
  `<http://iufro.boku.ac.at/iufronet/d6/hp60302.htm>`

- International bibliography of dictionaries, glossaries and terminological publications in forestry and related sciences
  `<http://iufro.boku.ac.at/iufro/silvavoc/pusv.htm>`

- SilvaTerm (terminological database)
  `<http://iufro.boku.ac.at/silvavoc/svdatabase.htm>`