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**A Swedish national forest programme –
participation and international agreements**

*Ett svenskt skogsprogram – deltagande och internationella
överenskommelser*

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depth of participation, scope of participation, international forest issues

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Abstract

Sweden is in the initial phase of forming a national forest programme (nfp). The establishment of an nfp has been evoked by international policy developments and a national debate questioning Swedish forestry and forest policy. National forest programmes are participatory processes for the development and implementation of forest-related policies and international commitments. Hence, the aim of this master thesis is to assess the stakeholders' acceptance of participation and integration of international issues within the Swedish national forest programme. Based on the concept of governance, this study's research questions focused on the integration of international issues and the scope and depth of participation in an nfp. To answer the research questions a literature review of European nfps and interviews with Swedish forest actors were performed.

The study's results show that the actors perceive a need for a Swedish nfp and want to participate in the programme, with the exception of ENGOs. The actors argue that the scope of participation of the programme should include expert administrators, elected representatives and professional stakeholders. The actors state that the Swedish nfp should be consultative and form the basis for policy decision by elected representatives. The interviewed actors agree on that international forest issues should be addressed within the context of the nfp and that the programme must relate to existing international agreements.

Keywords: *national forest programmes, nfp, forest governance, actors, depth of participation, scope of participation, international forest issues*

Sammanfattning

Sverige har inlett arbetet med att inrätta ett nationellt skogsprogram. Detta initiativ är framat av den politiska utvecklingen på internationell nivå samt en nationell debatt som har ifrågasatt svenskt skogsbruk och skogspolitik. Nationella skogsprogram är deltagandeprocesser för utveckling och implementering av skogsrelaterade policyer och internationella åtaganden. Därför är syftet med detta examensarbete att bedöma intressenters acceptans för deltagande och integrering av internationella frågor inom ett svenskt skogsprogram. Baserat på governance-teorier utformades forskningsfrågor rörande integrering av internationella skogsfrågor, deltagandevidd och deltagandedjup. För att besvara forskningsfrågorna genomfördes en litteraturgenomgång av europeiska skogsprogram samt intervjuer med svenska skogsintressenter.

Studiens resultat visar att de skogliga intressenterna upplever ett behov av ett nationellt skogsprogram samt vill delta i programmet, undantaget miljöorganisationerna. Intressenterna efterfrågar en deltagandevidd som omfattar sakkunniga, politiker och intresseorganisationer. Aktörerna uppger att ett svenskt skogsprogram deltagandedjup bör vara konsultativt och utgöra basen för beslut fattade av politiker. De intervjuade intressenterna är överens om att internationella skogsfrågor och överenskommelser bör behandlas inom ett svenskt skogsprogram.

Nyckelord: nationella skogsprogram, national forest programme (NFP), skogsgovernance, intressenter, deltagandedjup, deltagandevidd, internationella skogsfrågor

Preface

This Master thesis was conducted during my last year as a student at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. My supervisor Daniela Kleinschmit has, with her intellect and optimism, been an invaluable support in this process. Finally, I want to thank my respondents for taking the time to participate in this study.

Anna Ahlgren,
Uppsala, June 2014

Table of content

Abstract	
Sammanfattning	
Preface	
Table of content	5
Introduction	6
Background	8
Sweden's forest governance arrangement	8
<i>Authorities</i>	8
<i>Non-state forest actors</i>	9
<i>Regulatory framework</i>	9
Literature background	12
Theoretical considerations	14
Governance.....	14
<i>Actors and participation</i>	14
Research questions	17
Empirical design	18
Phase I – European nfps - a literature review	18
Phase II – A Swedish nfp – A qualitative text analysis and interviews	20
<i>Population and sample</i>	20
<i>Data collection</i>	21
<i>Data analysis</i>	22
<i>Validity and reliability</i>	22
Ethical considerations.....	23
Findings	24
<i>Austria</i>	24
<i>Finland</i>	25
<i>Germany</i>	27
Participation and integration of international agreements in a Swedish nfp	29
<i>The scope of participation</i>	31
<i>The depth of participation</i>	39
<i>Integration of international issues and agreements</i>	41
Discussion	42
Discussion of the findings	42
<i>How actors perceive the scope of participation in a national forest programme</i>	42
<i>How actors perceive the depth of participation in a national forest programme</i>	43
<i>How actors perceive the integration of international issues and agreements in a national forest programme</i>	43
Discussion of the use of theory	44
Discussion of the empirical design's influence on the study.....	44
Conclusion.....	44
References	45
Appendices	49

Introduction

National forest programmes (nfp) are a *participatory process for the development and implementation of forest-related policies and international commitments at the national level with participation of all stakeholders* (FAO 2010 p. xxiii). The concept of nfps, which is simply meant to promote sustainable forest management (SFM), arose in the forest policy aftermath of the 1992 UNCED Rio Conference (Hogl et al. 2009). Today approximately 75 percent of the World's forests are covered by nfps (FAO 2010). Sweden is in the initial phase of a national forest programme. The acceptance of the design of the nfp among involved stakeholders is crucial for an effective implementation. Hence, the aim of this master thesis is to assess the stakeholders' acceptance of participation and integration of international issues within the Swedish national forest programme.

A successful nfp in Sweden responds to international developments of forest policies and the national demand for change in the governance of forests. National forest policies are increasingly impacted by a forest regime characterized by a multi-level governance arrangement (Hogl 2000). Rayner and co-writers (2010, p.15) describe the international forest governance as a *..complex hybrid mix of international law, soft law and non-government performance-based measures* where some are forest focused and other forest related. In an European context the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) marks an important part of this international forest governance complex (Krott 2008; Andersson 2007; Edwards & Kleinschmit 2013). Within the framework of the MCPFE, EU and its member states support a pan-European forest policy based on international agreements (Andersson 2007). Already in 2003, the MCPFE member states agreed that a national forest programme (nfp) *constitutes a participatory, holistic, inter-sectoral and iterative process of policy planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation at the national and/or subnational level in order to proceed towards the further improvement of sustainable forest management* (MCPFE 2003 p. 1). During the 2011 Forest Europe Oslo conference the signatory states decided to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee with the mandate to elaborate a legally binding agreement (LBA) on forests in Europe (Forest Europe 2011). The latest draft negotiation text of the LBA states that parties in order to achieve the objectives and to implement the obligations of the Convention shall develop, implement and update nfps or equivalents (INC Forests 2013). An adoption of the LBA would lead to a new policy situation at the national level (Heino 2013).

Although Sweden is Europe's (Russia included) largest exporter of sawn wood and wood pulp and member of Forest Europe and UN, the country is one of few forest nations lacking a full-scaled nfp (FAOSTAT 2012; Nilsson 2012). Due to the international forest regime in general and the latest policy development at the pan-European level in particular the expectations and demands on Sweden to implement an nfp are becoming increasingly pronounced (Swedish Forest Agency 2013b). The pressure for new dialogue processes are boosted by a national discussion about forestry, where forestry and forest policy has been challenged in articles and books by journalists, i.e. Maciej Zaremba's *Skogen vi ärvde* [the Forest we inherited] and Po Tidholm's *Norrland*. While the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) calls for a new forest policy (see Swedish Society for Nature Conservation 2012). In 2013 the Environmental Committee suggested that Sweden should develop an nfp to reach Sweden's environmental quality and generational goals (SOU 2013:43). The Swedish Government gave the Swedish Forest Agency (SFA) the task to assess the adequacy of a program (Swedish Forest Agency 2013a). The assessment concluded that an nfp could provide added values to the traditional Swedish policy framework on forests (Swedish Forest Agency 2013a). Shortly

after, the Government decided that a dialogue process, within an nfp, should be established no later than July 1, 2015 (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency 2014).

This master thesis aims to contribute to a successful nfp in Sweden by exploring which design finds acceptance amongst the stakeholders. It particularly focuses on the scope of participation, the depth of participation and the integration of international issues. Methodologically this exploration is based on a review of scholarly literature of other European countries' experiences of nfps to understand possible designs and their acceptance in the respective countries. Furthermore, interviews with Swedish forest stakeholders are presented in order to better understand their preferred ways of participation and integration of international issues in the Swedish nfp.

Background

Key aspects of national forest programmes

National forest programmes are based on several principles (MCPFE 2003). Nfps should be participative, use an holistic and inter-sectorial approach, be consistent with international commitments and recognize synergies between the related initiatives and conventions, and use partnerships for implementation between businesses, civil society and governments (MCPFE 2003).

FAO (2006) considers nfps to evolve in a sequence of phases: analysis, policy formulation and planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation, Table 1.

Table 1. Outputs of the four different nfp phases (FAO 2006) (FAO, 2006 p.11)

Nfp phases	Output of nfp phases
Analysis	Sector review
Policy formulation and planning	Platform for stakeholder dialogue and participation A national forest statement Objectives and strategies for the forest sector Plans for action and investment programmes for the implementation of the agreed measures
Implementation	Political, legal and institutional reforms Information and knowledge management systems National and international partnership arrangements and joint activities
Monitoring and evaluation	Monitoring and evaluation reports/documentation

Sweden's forest governance arrangement

Sweden has a tradition of strong state governing, a historical legacy of democratic corporatism with highly institutionalized interaction between state actors and strong interest organizations..- Hysing (2009a p. 653)

The Swedish position has long been that Sweden meets the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests¹ requirements on nfps, without establishing a formal programme (Svensson 2004). One of the rationales for this standpoint is the institutionalized interaction between state actors and organized stakeholders, i.e. the country's forest policy is already characterized by a participatory governing style (Hysing 2009a; Svensson 2004). Given below is a description of the Swedish forest governance arrangement.

Authorities

Forests are subject of governance if governmental authorities in Sweden. Forestry is in the area of responsibility of the Ministry of Rural Affairs (Ministry of Rural Affairs 2014). The Swedish Forest Agency (SFA), under the Ministry of Rural Affairs, is the authority

¹ The Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) was established by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in 1995 and suggest nfps for all countries.

responsible for issues related to forestry. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), under the Ministry of Environment, is responsible for overall environmental policy.

SFA is the result of a merge of the County Forestry Boards (regional level) and the National Board of Forestry (national level) in 2006 (Appelstrand 2007). The agency's purpose is to promote forest management that enables the objectives of the national forest policy to be attained (SFS 2009:1393). SFA ensures observance of laws and regulations, and employ education, advisory and information services to forest owners (Swedish Forest Agency 2014b). The agency conducts forest inventories and is responsible for official statistics in production, employment, environment and social issues within forestry (Swedish Forest Agency 2014b). SFA is also engaged in international work (Swedish Forest Agency 2014b).

SEPA's task is to coordinate, monitor and evaluate efforts to meet Sweden's environmental objectives (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency 2013a). The bases for the national environmental policy are the action taken to achieve Sweden's 16 environmental quality objectives. SEPA is coordinating evaluations, communication and application of socio-economic impact assessments within the environmental quality system (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency 2012). SFA is responsible for the environmental quality objective Sustainable Forests (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency 2013b). Since the objectives involve an increased protection of forests, land and water reserves, formation of reserves is a part of the goal attainment. The County Boards and local authorities are responsible for the formation of reserves, while SEPA disposes government funds to compensate landowners (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency 2010).

Non-state forest actors

Sweden has a long tradition of involving non-state forest actors in the political process (Andersson 2007; Bjärstig 2013). The dialogue is possible since stakeholders are organized in national associations, trade unions and other types of organisations (Andersson 2007). Organisations representing forest owners, forestry and forest industrial workers, forest and forest products companies, conservation and environmentalists, hunters, outdoor people and the Samí people are usually permanent referral bodies or points of reference in the elaboration and implementation of forest policy (Andersson 2007; Ekelund & Hamilton 2001; Bjärstig 2013).

Regulatory framework

The first national forestry act was adopted in 1903 where the state took a stand against excessive exploitation of the country's forests (Appelstrand 2007). The 1903 Forestry Act stated forest owners' obligation to secure forest regeneration and timber production (Appelstrand 2007). This framework legislation made use of steering through counseling, education and persuasion as well coercion by the County Forestry Boards (Appelstrand 2007). This mix of soft and hard steering and collaboration between actors representing the government, market and civil society continued in subsequent legislation until the adoption of 1979 Forestry Act (Appelstrand 2012).

The 1979 Forestry Act meant a centralized, top-down command, and control model of steering (Appelstrand 2012). The forests would now be managed to provide a continuously high and valuable timber yield (Nylund 2009). Pre-commercial thinning, reforestation of low productive forests, final felling of old growth forests, forest management plans as well as environmental consideration was made compulsory (Nylund 2009; Enander 2007). Due to the active intervention policy Ekelund and Hamilton (2001 p. 86) argue that the 1980s

consequently became the decade of the 1900s where forest policy has had the strongest impact on the management of forests. A strong and environmentally conscious public opinion and the 1992 Rio Summit resulted in an awareness of concepts of biodiversity and multiple-use forests among Swedish politicians (Appelstrand 2007; Nylund 2009). These and other national and international factors prompted the introduction of an environmental goal of the Forestry Act (Appelstrand 2007). The 1990 parliamentary commission for a new forest policy included politicians and representatives from labour unions, forest industry, forest owners and the leading ENGO Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (Schlyter et al. 2009).

In 1993 a revised and deregulated Forestry Act came into force (Appelstrand 2012). The changes were radical: an environmental goal was introduced and was equated with the past production goal (Hysing 2009b; Appelstrand 2012). At the same time the centralized, top-down command and control model of steering was replaced by a softer steering focusing on e.g. information, advice and voluntary agreements (Appelstrand 2012). The government abstained from detailed objectives and emphasized voluntary measures by the forest sector as well as shared responsibility between the state and private actors (Boström 2003a; Sundström 2005). The new policy was summed up under the banner *Freedom with responsibility* (Appelstrand 2007). The banner highlighted that in order to reach the environmental goal of the forestry act voluntary measures by the forest owners were expected. It should, however, be noted that the Forestry Act is limited by the constitutional property rights, which were strengthened and expanded in 1994 (Strömberg 1997). The state can therefore not demand much from a landowner without offering compensation (Strömberg 1997).

In 2010 the Swedish Government decided to appoint a parliamentary committee whose task is to submit proposals on how Sweden's environmental quality and generational goals can be achieved (Swedish Government Official Reports 2013). In 2013 the Environmental Committee suggested that Sweden should develop an nfp in order to reach the environmental goals. The Swedish Government gave the Swedish Forest Agency (SFA) the task to assess the adequacy of a programme (Swedish Forest Agency 2013a). The assessment stated that an nfp could provide added values to the traditional Swedish policy framework on forests (Swedish Forest Agency 2013a). The Government decided in February 2014 that a dialogue process, within an nfp, should be established no later than July 1, 2015 (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency 2014).

Sectoral responsibility and the Sector Council on forest issues

In addition of requiring substantial, voluntary measures by forest owners and forestry, the state involved forest actors directly in shaping forestry goals in 2003-2005 (Sundström 2005). In the rationale behind the 1993 Forestry Act the Government stated that detailed regulation of forest policy was a matter for SFA (Sundström 2005). Hence, SFA was delegated by the government to elaborate national forest-sector objectives (Hysing 2009a) The sector goals were formulated by the authority in 1994 (Sundström 2005). In the 2003 revision of the forest-sector objectives SFA raised its ambitions (Sundström 2005). The sector authority argued that goal formulation should be done in cooperation with the forestry sector (Sundström 2005). The SFA, thus, coupled sectoral responsibility² with the forest-sector objectives (Sundström 2005). The National Sector Council was established as a forum for discussion and to reach

² Sectoral responsibility, established by the government in 1988, means that government agencies, enterprises and other organisations are obligated to take responsibility for environmental issues within their areas of operation (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency 2003). The establishment of sectoral responsibility was a governmental response to the existing environmental criticism (Appelstrand 2007). Much of the environmental legislation was inserted under the responsibility of SFA (Appelstrand 2007).

acceptance of forest issues among SFA and forest actors (Hysing 2009a). The council consisted of representatives from government agencies, research bodies, non-governmental organisations, state-owned enterprises and privately-owned companies.

The forest-sector objectives were published in 2005 and former Director-General Enander stated that the objectives *are the result of an extensive evaluation process in the National Sector Council on forest issues* (Swedish Forest Agency 2005 p. 3). The evaluation process was portrayed as a cooperation between equal partners striving to reach common solutions (Hysing 2009a). Sundström's (2005a) report clarifies that the project, in fact, has been driven by SFA who defined problems and proposed solutions. At the same time stakeholders have been given short deadlines to respond to these detailed arguments and suggestions. However, Veltheim (2006) argue that the process of developing forest-sector objectives corresponds well to the principles of the MCPFE Approach to National Forest Programmes in Europe. On the other hand, the objectives lack a plan for budget and responsibility for various actions and thus cannot be considered to fulfill the role of an nfp (Veltheim 2006). In 2014 the National Sector Council on forest issues serve as an advisory body to the SFA's Director General (Swedish Forest Agency 2014a), Table 2.

Table 2. 2014 member organisations in the National Sector Council on forest issues

Organisation type	Government agencies	Research bodies	Non-governmental organisations	State-owned enterprises	Privately-owned companies
Organisation	Swedish Forest Agency, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, The Swedish National Heritage Board, The Sami Parliament, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	The Federation of Swedish Family Forest Owners (LRF Forest Owners), Swedish Forest Industries Federation (SFIF), Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Swedish Outdoor Association, Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management, Swedish Local Heritage Federation, The Swedish union of forestry, wood and graphical workers (GS), Swedish Forestry Contractors (SMF), National Union of Swedish Saami people (SSR)	Sveaskog AB	Norra Skogsägarna, Bergvik skog AB, SCA AB

Forest certification

Another process indicating the participatory aspects of Swedish forest governance is the process of forest certification. A Forest Steward Council (FSC) working group was established in 1996 and consisted of representatives of the forest sector's major economic, social and environmental actors (Hysing 2009c). The certification process was driven by factors such as environmental concerns about forest practices in domestic as well as key export markets (Elliott & Schlaepfer 2001). In 1998 the Swedish FSC standard was adopted by the FSC International board (Hysing 2009c). Two of the actors, Greenpeace and LRF Forest Owners rejected the national standard (Hysing 2009c). The family forest owners decided instead to establish a Swedish Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) standard (Hysing 2009c). Today both FSC and PEFC are regarded as important and

legitimate elements of the Swedish forest policy framework (Boström 2003a). The certification schemes display clear characteristics of private governance, in which actors establish a governing capacity based on self-regulation (Hysing 2009c). However, the Swedish case is about governing *with* government rather than governing *without* government since the state has supported, facilitated and influenced the process, e.g. through deregulation of forest policy, political statements in favor for certification and participation by the state-owned forest company Sveaskog (Hysing 2009c; Boström 2003b).

In summary, this background indicates that the Swedish forest policy has over time been characterized by collaboration between the government, market and civil society. Hence, participatory processes are institutionalized within the policy framework.

Literature background

There is a group of scientific papers on participation or integration of international issues in national forest programmes. Some of these articles are devoted to discussing the concept of nfps based on theories. An example of this is Elsasser's article (Elsasser 2002) basing on rational choice, game and negotiation theory. Elsasser (2002) concludes that participation in an nfp has two preconditions: organisation of a specific interest and sufficient interest in participating. Furthermore he points out that incentives and opportunities to participate in an nfp might be unevenly distributed among participants (Elsasser 2002). In a similar way Voitleithner (2002) argue that Austria's work with their nfp was limited by the country's political culture of a strong circle of powerful lobbyists and forest authorities.

Elsasser (2007) highlights democratic aspects of participation, since non-governmental participants are neither democratically authorized nor accountable to the population. He pointed out that the German population in general assesses the policy aims of the nfp as important but significantly different from stakeholders participating in the nfp. E.g. the population regards the aim of increased wood utilization as less important than the involved stakeholders. Elsasser (2007) argues that this can be regarded as a deficit of legitimization. He concludes that this deficit can be solved through letting an nfp be subject to discussion by elected politicians, while nfp participants can seek greater legitimacy among the public (Elsasser 2007).

Primmer and Kyllönen (2006) are in their study focusing on the scope of participation. They identified goals for participation which include: generating new relevant information, incorporating all relevant interests and contributing to reach public agreement. The researchers then evaluated the Finnish national forest programme based on these aspects (Primmer & Kyllönen 2006). The widened scope of participation, e.g. public forums, did not generate new information or new interests nor functioned as arena for public agreement (Primmer & Kyllönen 2006). Instead they functioned as legitimating and awareness raising processes (Primmer & Kyllönen 2006).

Lindstad and Solberg (2012) found Finland's national forest programme to be substantially influenced by international recommendations, e.g. by IPF, IFF/UNFF and Forest Europe. This responsiveness to international recommendations can be interpreted as a result of being an early adopter at the international arena (Lindstad & Solberg, 2012). Finland's intentions to contribute to SFM internationally indicate a normative influence, i.e. international processes have contributed to distribute and create new knowledge (Lindstad & Solberg 2012).

Pülzl and Rametsteiner (2002) report on the international community's expectations on national forest programmes. Their position is that an nfp's primary function is to adopt mechanisms to implement international agreements (Pülzl & Rametsteiner 2002). Nfps are expected to deliver improved international cooperation and provide financial support to forestry in developing countries (Pülzl & Rametsteiner 2002). The international community also believes that nfps are important instruments to promote public participation and the maintenance of forest cover (Pülzl & Rametsteiner 2002).

The literature shows that the scope and depth of participation are relevant measures of an nfp process (Elsasser 2002; Primmer & Kyllönen 2006). Furthermore the integration of international policies is of high relevance within national forest programmes (Pülzl & Rametsteiner 2002).

Theoretical considerations

..the forest sector is affected to a growing extent, both directly and indirectly, by decisions taken beyond Sweden's borders,.. – Kleinschmit et al. (2012 p. 127)

In this thesis nfps are theoretically framed by the concept of governance with focus on actors and participation on the one hand and the multi-level perspective on the other hand.

Governance

Governance is characterized by a vertical and horizontal broadening of national policy making: to non-state actors participating in the political decision making and to other levels of policy making beyond or below the national level (multi-level) (Piattoni 2009).

The background chapter reveals that Swedish forestry stakeholders have participated in the design of the Swedish forest policy and have established a private governance capacity. At the same time, the government has put more responsibility on private actors to fulfill the political goals of the sector. These requirements are combined with the use of soft policy instruments and an explicit support to the process of forest certification. Both private and public actors are involved in international forest policy processes, i.e. MCPFE and EU. EU forest-related policies have direct effect in Sweden and the Government of Sweden has signed a number of international conventions, e.g. the UN convention on biological biodiversity (CBD). This simplified description of the Swedish governance arrangement on forests indicates that there are actors and institutions active on sub-national, national and international arenas. This description is covered by the concept of governance. The concept of nfps also calls for the integration of different actors and levels of government and therefore could be viewed as a governance instrument.

Governance refers to *a broader, more inclusive and more encompassing process of coordination than do the conventional view of government* (Peters & Pierre 2002 p. 6-9). Where the governing styles' boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred (Stoker 1998). Public and private actors collaborate and compete in shifting coalitions; policy making does not separate policy-makers from policy receivers nor distinguish between public and private actors (Piattoni 2009; Hooghe & Marks 2003). Policy arrangements have a multi-level character, they are created and developed on different levels and are mutually influential (Arts et al. 2006). Hence, international rules and agreements affect national policy since they create binding obligations on the nation state (Bernstein & Cashore 2000). There is only little or no capability to predict outcomes in advance of these negotiated arrangements (Peters & Pierre 2002). However, it is important to emphasize that the nation state is not disappearing or is going to do so in the near future (Arts et al. 2006; Peters & Pierre 2002). The most important linkage among levels of governance is still institutions (Peters & Pierre 2002).

The concept of governance is an approach rather than a theory, but gives a realistic perspective on modern politics (Hogl 2002). For the purpose of this paper governance will be used as a framework in order to capture an actor perspective on the political environment of Swedish forest policy.

Actors and participation

The forest policy arena contains many actors and conflicting interests (Appelstrand 2012; Sundström 2005). Politicians, authorities as well as interests groups and citizens are directly involved in the process of policy making (Krott 2005). The forest administration serves

towards realizing the public goals of forest policy while forest users, mainly forest owners, are targeted by regulatory functions (Krott 2005). Government and authorities, forest owners, forest industries, trade unions, environmental NGOs and research and expertise are seen as important forest policy actors (Janse 2007). These actors are differentiated by their policy positions and activity (Meltsner 1972). Forest policy making can function as *a social bargaining process for regulating conflicts of interest* (Krott 2005 p. 12) . When different interests and goals are hard to combine negotiations are necessary. It is important to make close observations of conflicting interests since policy processes often includes the exercise of power (Meltsner 1972). However, actors might tend to mask their policy preferences and interests in order to gain advantages in the bargaining process, an obstacle for policy analysis to take into account (Meltsner 1972).

In Sweden stakeholders have access to political decision making (Primmer & Kyllönen 2006). Participation is also seen as an integral element of nfps (Appelstrand 2002). Participation can be defined as *the involvement of individuals and groups that are positively or negatively affected by a proposed intervention (e.g., a project, a program, a plan, a policy), subject to a decision-making process or are interested in it* (André et al. 2006 p. 1).

Dietz and Stern (2008 in Glucker et al. 2013 p. 109) differ on the general public and stakeholders. Where the public refers to the broader collectivity of individuals who are not directly affected by a decision but may have some interest in it, while stakeholders involves organised groups that are or will be affected by a decision or have a strong interest in the outcome of it. In this thesis ‘stakeholders’ and ‘actors’ are used interchangeably. Rationales behind participation are e.g. securing of different public interests, the right of political participation, and legitimacy as a justifying mechanism (Appelstrand 2002). An additional reason for participation is that politicians or administrative officials may lack the needed competence or knowledge (Fung 2006).

In research different levels of participation are distinguished, often compared to rungs on a ladder (Reed 2008). One of the most widely used ladders of participation is Biggs’ (Biggs 1989 in Reed 2008 p.2419), who described the level of actor involvement and control over the process as a relationship that either can be *contractual, consultative, collaborative or collegiate*. Biggs’ ladder of participation was later generalized by Barreteau et al. (2010), Table 3.

Table 3. *Depth of participation* (Barreteau et al. 2010)

Participation mode	Characteristics in terms of actor involvement and control over the process
Contractual	One actor has sole decision-making power over most of the decisions taken in the process, and can be considered the “owner” of this process. Other actors participate in activities defined by this “owner” by being (formally or informally) “contracted” to provide services and support.
Consultative	Most of the key decisions are kept with one actor, but emphasis is put on consultation and gathering information from other actors, especially for identifying constraints and opportunities, priority setting, and/or evaluation.
Collaborative	Different actors collaborate and are put on an equal footing, emphasizing links through an exchange of knowledge, different contributions, and a sharing of decision-making power during the process.
Collegiate	Different actors work together as colleagues or partners. “Ownership” and responsibility are equally distributed among the partners, and decisions are made by agreement or consensus among all actors.

Cornwall and Jewkes (1995) has added a further dimension to the approach of participation by contrasting the depth of participation with the scope of participation, from narrow participation, i.e. few participants, to broad participation, i.e. many participants. Fung (2006) categorizes this spectrum from exclusive to inclusive participation based on eight selection mechanisms of participation. The focus is rather on who may participate than how many are eligible to participate. The more exclusive participation would allow participation from expert administration only while the more inclusive participation would broaden participation to include a diffuse public sphere, Figure 1.

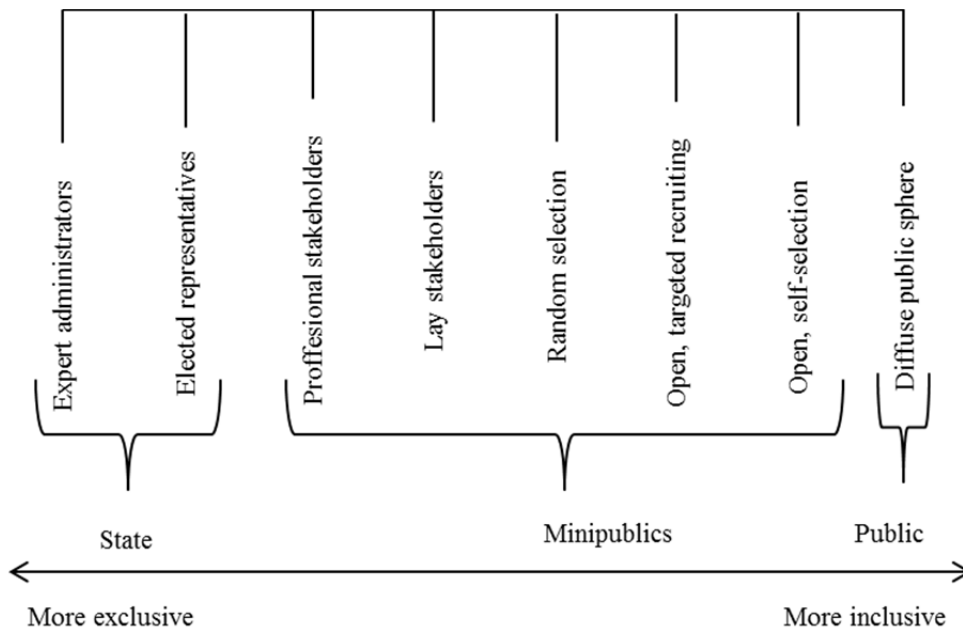


Figure .1 Scope of participation (Fung, 2006).

Expert administrators are those who staff our public bureaucracies. *Elected representatives* are professional politicians. *Professional stakeholders* correspond to representatives of organized interests and public officials. *Lay stakeholders* are unpaid citizens who have profound interests in a public issue. A *random selection* of the public gives a descriptive representativeness. To selectively recruit participants from a subgroup is a method of *targeted recruiting* to engage citizens who are less likely to participate in an open policy process. *Self-selection* means that the process is open for anyone to attend. However, self-selected participants rarely represent the opinions of the general public. The *diffuse public sphere* is a designation for the general public, mass media, secondary associations and informal venues of discussion. It is important to stress that different depths and scopes of participation is valid for different contexts (Barreteau et al. 2010; Fung 2006). The depth and scope of participation can fluctuate within a process depending on context and goals (Barreteau et al. 2010).

Summarizing the concept of governance on can identify two main characteristics: the multi-level aspects and participation. As identified in the former section on literature nfsp are marked by the same characteristics and thus can be classified as a governance process. This classification is in line with the literature (Hogl 2002). Figure 2 visualizes this delineation of the conceptual framework of this thesis.

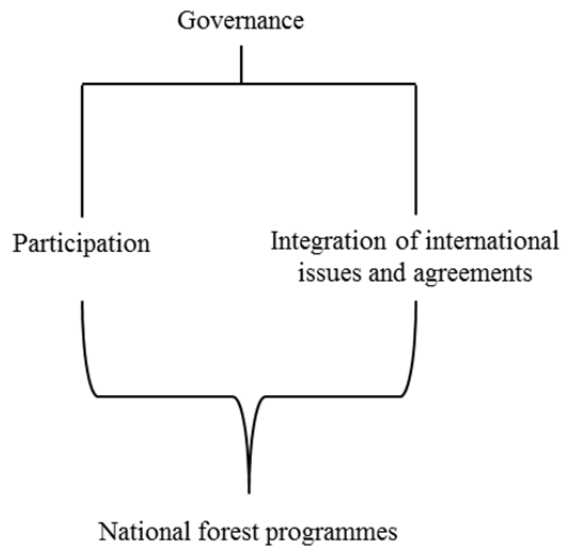


Figure 2. An illustration of the thesis' theoretical framework.

This framework is supported by the understanding of effective participation as described by Webler and Tuler (2006) who argue that it is essential to know how actors think about multi-actor processes and knowing what they want from these processes, in order to elaborate a legitimate and effective process. Hence, the conceptual framework of this thesis takes on an actor centered perspective by assessing how actors accept the design of the governance process with focus on participation and integration of international issues and agreements.

Research questions

In order to raise a pre-understanding of how participation and integration of international issues and agreements can be integrated in an nfp the first research question was identified:

1. How has participation and integration of international issues and agreements been handled in European nfps?

To reach the major aim of the study, the following research questions have been identified:

2. How do actors perceive the depth of participation in a national forest programme?
3. How do actors perceive the scope of participation in a national forest programme?
4. How do actors perceive the integration of international issues and agreements in a national forest programme?

Empirical design

The major aim of this study is to clarify actors' acceptance on participation and integration of international issues within an nfp. Within social research a distinction is often made between quantitative and qualitative research strategies (Bryman 2008; Rudestam & Newton 2007). Where a qualitative research, as opposed to a quantitative, aims for an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon in its natural context and values subjectivity (Rudestam & Newton 2007). In order to examine the topic a qualitative research strategy with a deductive approach was used (Bryman 2008). Qualitative research is often categorized as inductive rather than deductive, i.e. a theoretical pre-understanding could disturb the analysis of the empirical data (Bryman 2008). However, Silverman (2005) argues that there is no longer a need to regard qualitative research as never based on initial hypotheses since previous studies have assembled an accumulated body of knowledge. The deductive approach implies that the empirical results are organized with the help of a theoretical framework and that the research questions are influenced by a theoretical pre-understanding (Holme & Solvang 1991; Silverman 2005).

Qualitative data collection is usually made by the following methods: questionnaires, interviews, observations, text analysis and audio or video recordings (Silverman 2005). This thesis conducts a literature review and semi-structured interviews with forest actors. The literature review was conducted in order to give a pre-understanding of participation and integration of international agreements within European nfps. The reason for choosing European countries for the review is that they, like Sweden, have to take the MCPFE's principles of nfps into consideration. Interviews were chosen as methods since the study aims to identify actors opinions rather than actions, the respondents are few and the interviewees answers are expected to be extensive (Denscombe 2010). The chapter is divided into two phases:

- I. European nfps – a literature review
- II. Swedish nfp – interviews

The first phase aims to describe and justify the chosen subjects for the literature review, the surveying of the literature and the synthesizing of the findings. The second phase aims to describe and justify the population and sample, data collection, data analysis and validity and reliability. The phase concludes with ethical considerations.

Phase I – European nfps - a literature review

European countries differ in terms of natural features and socioeconomic circumstances related to forests (Kankaanpää & Carter; Rametsteiner et al. 2008; Winkel et al. 2009). However, Austria, Finland and Sweden are seen as a distinct region focusing on globalized wood production (Kankaanpää & Carter; Rametsteiner et al. 2008; Winkel et al. 2009). Since both Austria and Finland have nfps they are subject to this literature review. The German nfp collapsed during the implementation phase (Winkel & Sotirov 2002). The program, therefore, serves as a contrast to the Finnish and Austrian nfps, which both have led to implementation of effective measures (Swedish Forest Agency, 2013b). The goal of this literature review is to provide a pre-understanding of how an nfp can be organized with regard to participation and international aspects. For that reason, this review does not claim to give a complete description of the three different programs.

The literature search was conducted during April 2014. An initial search was made using internet as the sole source of information. Both scientific papers and official documents have been searched using the search engines Google and Google Scholar, and the journal database Web of Science. The search strategy used Boolean logic and the key words 'national forest programme' along with 'Germany' or 'Finland' or 'Austria'.

The search rendered a total of 24 092 search results. For each search, surveying of the literature was restricted to the first 50 results sorted by relevance. The articles' titles and abstracts were reviewed by criteria established before the search was initiated:

- i) The study should be published in a peer-reviewed journal
OR
The report should be published by a national authority linked to the national forest programme
- ii) The study or report should be published 1997 or later
- iii) The study or report should be written in English
- iv) The study or report should focus on the national forest programme in Austria, Finland or Germany
- v) The study or report should be available in full text for download via the internet

After the examination 43 articles and reports remained. After a reading, 19 of them were considered relevant, Table 4. Articles that merely repeated other relevant journal articles content and repetitive authority reports were omitted. If considered necessary a manual review of the references was made, the number of relevant documents increased to 20. Scientific papers identified in the manual screening did not have to be published in a peer-reviewed journal.

Table 4. Surveying of the literature

Country	Search engine or journal database	Search results	Articles meeting the criterias	Relevant literature
Austria	Google	8690	6/50	Voitleithner (2002) BMLFUW (2007) BMLFUW (2006) (6 duplicates)
	Google Scholar	315	4/50	Howlett & Rayner (2006b) Winkel & Sotirov (2011) Hogl et al. (2009) Howlett & Rayner (2006a) (1 duplicate)
	Web of Science References	2	2/2 -	(1 duplicate) -
Finland	Google	6630	8/50	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland (2008) Indufor (2007) Primmer & Kyllönen (2006) Lindstad & Solberg (2012) Government of Finland 2008)
	Google Scholar	661	4/50	Howlett & Rayner (2006b) (1 duplicate)
	Web of Science References	19	2/14 -	(2 duplicates) -
Germany	Google	7140	6/50	BfN (2001) German Federal Government (2003) Winkel & Sotirov (2011) Elasser (2007) Schanz (2002)
	Google Scholar	612	4/50	Howlett & Rayner (2006b) (3 duplicates)
	Web of Science References	4	¼ Not applicable	(1 duplicate) Hofmann & Liss (2001)

The remaining 20 articles and reports were undertaken a systematic review of the content based on the two broad categories participation and international aspects (Cronin et al. 2008). This was done individually for each country. Material relating to any of the categories formed the basis for the synthesis. When the literature was synthesized it was compared with the Swedish Forest Agency's (2013b) report *Förstudie om ett nationellt skogsprogram för Sverige – Omvärldsanalys* [A prestudy on a national forest program for Sweden – Policy intelligence], if considered necessary, additions were made.

Phase II – A Swedish nfp – A qualitative text analysis and interviews

Population and sample

To locate respondents purposive sampling was used (Silverman 2005). Which means that participants are selected on basis of their relevance to the research questions (Silverman 2005; Bryman 2008). The goal with the sampling was to pick key actors within the Swedish governance arrangement, since they probably will be a part of the forthcoming nfp. The sampling procedure began with identification of forest actors. For this task the *Remiss avseende Skogsstyrelsens Förstudie om ett nationellt skogsprogram för Sverige – Förslag och ställningstaganden (Meddelande 5 2013)* [Inquiry regarding the Swedish Forest Agency's prestudy on a national forest program for Sweden - Proposal and positions (Note 5 2013)] was used (see Government Offices of Sweden, 2013). The criteria for selection were:

- The actor should hold the position of a referral body OR be a relevant actor clearly linked to the nfp.
- The actor's area of operation should clearly affect or be affected by forest issues, i.e. the actor has to have a stake in forests or forestry.

Based on Janse (2007) the following categories were chosen to cover the broad representation of governmental, private and societal forest actors: authorities, forest industries, forest owners and ENGOS. The category of science was added after a number of interviewees mentioned the importance of their involvement in an nfp. The number of consultative bodies was 186 different governmental and non-governmental organisations, where 112 organisations are considered to be authorities, 5 organisations represent forest industries, 5 organisations represent family forest owners, 2 organisations represent ENGOS and 11 organisations represent science. For reasons of time restrictions and size of the study 3 authorities, 4 forest industries, 2 forest owners, 2 ENGOS and 3 actors representing science were selected. 11 of the actors held the position of consultative bodies. Among forest industries those who had left a consultation response were chosen in the first place, the fourth respondent were chosen randomly. Corresponding industries were prioritized since it was assumed that they were better versed in the issue. As forest owners had responded to the inquiry jointly, two organisations were chosen randomly. 2 of the authorities and 1 of the actors representing science were chosen due to their clear linkage to an nfp. Of the organizations surveyed 12 accepted the interview request, Table 5. One authority declined to be interviewed and one university did not have the possibility to participate.

Table 5. Participating actors and their representatives

Category	Forest industry	Forest owners	ENGOS	Authorities	Science
Respondents	1 interest group 3 private companies	1 interest group 1 economic association	2 interest groups	2 government agencies	2 research institutes
Representatives	1 forest policy adviser 2 chief executive officers (CEO) 1 senior vice president	1 forest director 1 CEO	1 forest policy adviser 1 vice president	1 director general 1 deputy director general	1 researcher 1 CEO

Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the method for data collection (Trost 2010). The method was chosen due to the need to gain insight into the actors' opinions in a number of areas (Denscombe 2010). The method serves to address the specific research questions without pigeon-holing the response and allows the researcher to ask further questions and/or vary the sequence of questions (Bryman 2008).

The interviews were done by telephone and were carried out during May 2014. Telephone interviews are regarded as highly efficient in relation to the volume of data collected (Bryman 2008). However, the possibility to observe interviewees' body language in response to questions is lost using telephone interviewing (Bryman 2008). The first contact was made by e-mail. Actor representatives were asked whether their organisation wished to participate. The representatives were contacted either because they had signed the official response to the inquiry or because they were head of their organization. A few days after the email had been sent out, the key contacts were contacted by phone. A time for interview was booked either with the interviewees or their secretaries. The interviews lasted between 20-44 minutes. The interviews were conducted in Swedish. The interviews were recorded and field notes were taken. The recorded material amounted to 5 hours and 22 minutes. An interview guide was used for each interview. The guide was designed based on the thesis' theoretical considerations and research questions, Table 6.

Table 6. Linkage between theoretical considerations, research questions and interview questions

Theory	Research question	Example of interview questions
Depth of participation	How do actors perceive the depth of participation in a national forest programme?	Which actors do you think should be subject to an nfp?
Scope of participation	How do actors perceive the scope of participation in a national forest programme?	From your opinion: how should participation take place in an nfp?
Governance – vertical broadening of national policy	How do actors perceive the integration of international issues and agreements in a national forest programme?	Do you think that international forest-related issues should be integrated into an nfp?

The guide included the interview questions and some information about the interviewer, the interview topics and the interview outline, Appendix. The interview guide was discussed with the supervisor and pre-tested on a forest actor (Silverman 2005). These actions led to minor changes of the interview questions. To reproduce the interviewee's answers correctly and in

its entirety the interviews were transcribed (Bryman 2008). The 12 semi-structured interviews resulted in 24 120 words of transcripts which had to be analyzed in a qualitative manner as described below.

Data analysis

As this analysis aims to systematically describe text content it can be classified as a content analysis (Bergström & Boréus 2012). While nothing is measured or counted, it should be regarded as qualitative (Bergström & Boréus 2012). Qualitative content analysis is *an approach of systematic, rule guided qualitative text analysis* (Mayring 2000 p. 1). The object of analysis can be all sort of recorded communication, e.g. transcripts of interviews, protocols of observations, or documents (Mayring 2000). This thesis focuses on the texts' interpersonal function in the sense that it is the senders' opinions and information that form the basis for analysis (Bergström & Boréus 2012). The analysis is carried out by bringing categories in connection with the transcripts (Mayring 2000). The categories are derived and defined from the theoretical background and research questions, Table 7 (Mayring 2000).

Table 7. Categories used for analysis of transcripts

Scope of participation	Depth of participation	International issues
Expert administrators and elected representatives: governmental authorities, civil servants and politicians	Contactual	
Professional stakeholders: forest industry, forest owners, NGOs, science and other organizations	Consultative	
Public	Collaborative Collegiate	

The data analysis was carried out with help from a qualitative data analysis computer software named NVivo 10. The software supports the work in storing and categorizing the data (Denscombe 2010). It is however important to stress that it is the researcher that needs to conduct the analysis, since there is no automatic processing of the data (Denscombe 2010). The Microsoft Word files with transcripts were uploaded into NVivo10. The transcripts were categorized individually by the main categories: depth of participation, scope of participation and international agreements. The data within the main categories were then analysed separately. During this analysis the information was sorted within sub-categories in order to create an overview. The sub-noded data was then transferred to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet where each sub-node had its own sheet. The data was grouped within its respondent category and summarized if needed. Thereafter the final analysis and compilation of results were performed.

Validity and reliability

To increase the validity and reliability of the study, several actions were undertaken, Table 8. Validity refers to the issue whether an instrument measures what it is claimed to measure (Bryman 2008). Internal validity refer to the credibility of the study's findings and conclusions (Rudestam & Newton 2007). External validity refers to the concern whether the results can be generalized beyond the context of the study (Bryman 2008; Rudestam & Newton 2007). Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure, i.e. to what extent the results are stable over time (Bryman 2008).

Table 8. Measures to improve validity and reliability. Linkage between theoretical considerations, research questions and interview questions

Aspect of research quality	Actions taken in this study
Internal validity	Literature review of European nfps Purposive sampling Use of an actor perspective Design of interview guide and categories based on research questions Use of NVivo Use of categories for data analysis
External validity	Purposive sampling
Reliability	Use of an established research methodology Use of an interview guide Use of categories for data analysis

To reinforce preconceptions and thus internal validity the literature review of European nfps was conducted. In the second phase of the study transparency and systematicity was sought by basing the interview guide and categories on the research questions. Also the sampling procedure was based on the research questions. The use of an actor perspective strives to give different stakeholders' view on a matter, i.e. source triangulation.

Purposive sampling was also used to strengthen the external validity, i.e. respondents' answers should reflect the stakeholder category's opinions on the topic nationally.

To strengthen reliability established research methodology, interview guide and data analysis categories were used. Before interviews were conducted the interview guide was discussed with the supervisor, who has many years of experience in qualitative research.

Ethical considerations

The respondents in the study are anonymous. The organizations they are representing are divided into different categories. One of the reasons for categorization was the fact that the key forest actors are few, and relatively easy to identify if reported individually.

In connection with the interview request an email was sent out to the respondents. The email informed participants about the following:

- i) An explanation about the study;
- ii) Who is conducting the study;
- iii) Why the actor has been selected;
- iv) Participation is voluntary;
- v) Limits of confidentiality;
- vi) What the time commitment is;
- vii) Debriefing;
- viii) An offer to answer questions (Rudestam & Newton 2007).

In this manner the scientific norm of fulfilled consent was reached (Rudestam & Newton 2007).

Findings

National Forest Programmes in European countries

Austria

The Austrian nfp was launched by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (BMLFUW) in April 2003 (Austrian Federal Government 2004). The initiation of the nfp was a result from commitments taken at the UN and pan-European levels as well as EU legislation (Hogl et al. 2009; Voitleithner 2002). The initiation of nfps in other European countries also influenced the decision (Hogl et al. 2009; Howlett & Rayner 2006a). Apart from consistency with international agreements and commitments the Austrian nfp has been based on active participation of interested actors (BMLFUW 2007). Approximately 80 institutions and organisations participated in the process, representing e.g. environmentalists and conservationists, sports, forest industries, forestry and agriculture, hunters and science (BMLFUW 2007). The general public was invited to participate in the process' public sessions, internet platform and through written comments (BMLFUW 2007).

All participatory activities were facilitated by independent moderators and rapporteurs (BMLFUW 2007). The Austrian nfp consisted of a round table which functioned as the central decision-making body, a coordinating group, working modules and a process management group, Figure 3 (BMLFUW 2007; BMLFUW 2006).

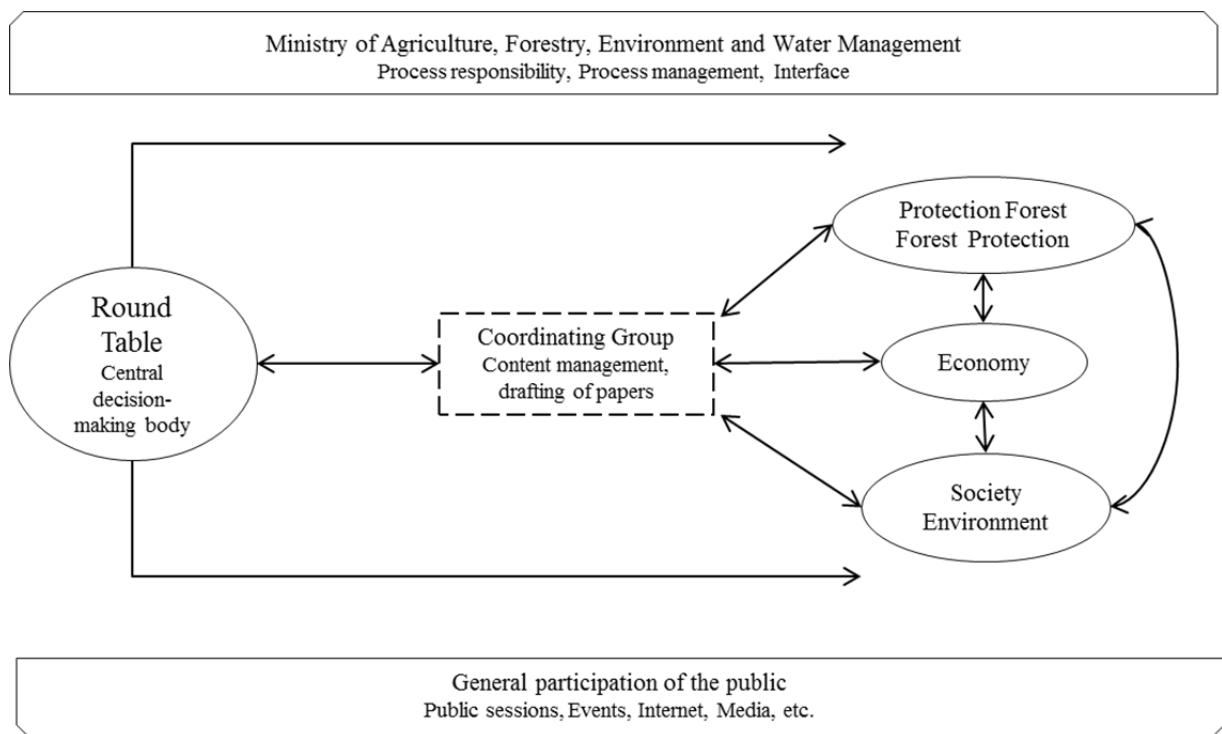


Figure 3. Structure of the Austrian nfp (BMLFUW 2007).

Integration of international agreements and issues

Within the Austrian Forest Program there are three principles of Austria's international responsibility for SFM:

- Strive for a global, effective, protection of forests, SFM and fair competitive conditions;

- Promoting international networking, partnerships, cooperation and activities of private and public institutions;
- Development and implementation of the ecosystem-based management approaches (BMLFUW 2006).

Six different goals were also established, inter alia, creation of a globally-binding instrument on forests, controlling illegal logging, support of knowledge transfer, integration of SFM in development cooperation (BMLFUW 2006). However, Hogl (2009) argue that the international aspects of nfps were primarily manifested in the procedural characteristics of the Austrian nfp, even though topics such as illegal logging and timber trade, and Austria's responsibility to promote SFM internationally were discussed within the program (Hogl et al. 2009).

Finland

National forest programmes have been prepared in Finland since 1993, in accordance with the 1992 UNCED principles (Government of Finland 2008). The Finnish Government approved the first programme in 1999 (Government of Finland 2008). Since 2000 the national forest programme has been implemented as a part of Finland's Government Programme (Government of Finland 2008). The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is coordinating the nfp with support from the programme's forest council, secretariat and working groups, Table 9 (Government of Finland 2008).

Table 9. Actor representation in Finland's national forest programme (Primmer & Kyllönen 2006)

	Ministerial group	Forest council	Forest management and protection working group	Forest utilization and markets working group	Forestry innovation working group	Secretariat	Public forums
Ministries	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Government agencies	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Research and education	X	X		X	X	X	
Forest owners		X	X	X		X	X
Forest industry		X	X	X	X	X	X
Trade unions		X		X			
ENGOS		X	X				X
Other NGOs			X	X			

The national forest programme's general secretary is a scientist and director of a research institute (Primmer & Kyllönen 2006) The forest council functions as an advisory board to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and consists of actors representing authorities, forest industries, NGOs and expert organizations (Government of Finland 2008). The secretariat consisted of the secretary general of the nfp and the chairs and secretaries of the working groups (Primmer & Kyllönen 2006). The secretariat was established to prepare and coordinate the working groups (Primmer & Kyllönen 2006). The Ministry of Agriculture dominated the secretariat (Primmer & Kyllönen 2006). The working groups were dominated by state actors, whereas the forest industry, forest owners, trade unions and science had strong representation, NGOs were participating in some working groups. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland had representatives in all groups. The objective of the working groups was to prepare the national forest programme through hearing specialists and utilizing information

and opinions from public forums (Primmer & Kyllönen 2006). The purpose of the public forums was to create an arena for citizens and NGOs, where they could express their opinions on the programme's objectives, strategies and activities (Primmer & Kyllönen 2006)

The vision of the programme was formulated after the forest council and working groups had heard specialists and taken the opinions from 25 public forums and 48 written statements into account. A draft of the vision was prepared and presented to the ministerial group, which approved it (Primmer & Kyllönen 2006). The secretariat, primarily, formulated the programme. After receiving 92 statements from forestry organisations, authorities, NGOs, professionals and citizens a second draft was submitted to the forest council. The forest council commented on the draft and handed it back to the secretariat. The fifth draft, with minor changes, was presented to the Government, who decided on the execution of the programme at the end of 1999 (Primmer & Kyllönen 2006). The programme has mainly been implemented through the allocation of budgetary funds to forestry operations and organisations (Primmer & Kyllönen 2006).

The public forums and written statements were supposed to provide channels for new information. However, the forums concentrated on topics and arguments already covered by the existing forest policy discourse. Primmer and Kyllönen (2006) state that there are no evidence that the forums functioned as an area for expressing new interests. The written statements put forward a broader range of issues, e.g. recreation, cultural aspects and tourism, but at the core most of the statements focused on the significance of forests, forestry and forest industry to the Finnish people and the national economy (Primmer & Kyllönen 2006). The different instruments of participation served merely as a legitimating and awareness raising system (Primmer & Kyllönen 2006). Rayner and Howlett (2006b p.262) argue that the result of Finland's National Forest Programme 2010 was a legitimizing nfp *layered on top of the traditional command-and-control governance strategy already in place.*

Due to the significant changes in the forest sector's operating environment, a decision of a revision of the national forest programme was made in 2005 (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland 2008). Finland's National Forest Programme 2015 was formulated in collaboration with forest policy actors (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland 2008). The actors represented ministries, government authorities, science and education, forest owners, forest industry, environmental organisations, trade unions, entrepreneurs, youth and leisure organisations (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland 2008). The coordination of the programme was handled, as before, by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, the forest council, the secretariat and working groups (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland 2008). The ministry held separate hearings with different actors, organized feedback seminars and presented the draft programme at other actor's events. The draft was accessible for comment on the ministry's website. In parallel with these preparations an external ex ante evaluation was carried out (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland 2008). The evaluation highlighted that the draft programme, inter alia, was clear and consistent, had improved the logic between aims and implementation, searched for better instruments to improve collaboration, that choices are based on compromises with stakeholder groups, and consider other important policies and agreements (Indufor 2007). The ex ante evaluation also showed weaknesses, e.g. implementation required better prioritizing of aims and measures, the programme lacks market orientation, globalization is regarded as an threat instead of an opportunity and global social sustainability is not sufficiently supported by Finland's international forest policy (Indufor 2007). Furthermore, the target levels of the programme are considered ambitious and the programme strives for specifying responsible

bodies, financiers and operators, but the nfp process is considered to be predominately administrative and the commitment from the private sector, including forest owner and industry, insufficient. The results of the ex ante evaluation were discussed in the forest council, secretariat and working groups (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland 2008).

The forest council approved the proposal for Finland's National Forest Programme 2015 in January 2008 (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland 2008). The programme was endorsed as a government resolution by the Government two months later (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland 2008). The aim of the new programme is to increase the welfare of Finnish citizens through the diverse use of forests in compliance with the principles of sustainable development (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland 2008 p. 7). The programme was constructed upon six priorities, inter alia, ensure a competitive operating environment for the forest industry and forestry and promote SFM in international forest policy (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland 2008).

Integration of international agreements and issues

The priority of promoting SFM in international policy consists of three objectives (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland 2008). Within the objective of international forest policy Finland will promote a globally-binding instrument on forests, prepare and implement international forest-related agreements, e.g. CBD, use expertise from the entire forest sector to prepare and monitor international forest affairs and promote the use of sustainable and legally produced wood products. Within the objective of forest affairs in the European Union Finland will implement the EU Forest Action Plan, act towards that EU decision making will promote sfm, monitor and anticipate the effects on forest management on policy decisions concerning energy, climate and agriculture, prepare national initiatives and positions on EU issues, and underline the importance of research and development. Within the objective of development cooperation and other bilateral cooperation Finland will, inter alia, support nfps, support actions taken to strengthen the role of the forest sector in climate change mitigation and adaptation, establish strategic partnerships with research and development funding agencies, continue and develop bilateral cooperation in forest affairs. Since the Finnish nfp follows the IPF procedural requirements of an nfp, it is assessed to be influenced by international recommendations (Lindstad & Solberg 2012)

Germany

The German nfp was launched by the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Forestry (BML) in 1999 (Winkel & Sotirov 2011). BML's goal was to create a comprehensive and powerful alliance of actors for the forests and its functions (Swedish Forest Agency 2013b). The program was seen as a new tool for governing the forest and was based on principles of, inter alia, participation and collaboration. Other reasons that the program was founded was the growing number of countries establishing nfps and Germany's international commitments (Swedish Forest Agency 2013b). Individual invitations were sent to all, by the ministry, known forest policy actors (Hofmann & Liss 2001). The participation included federal ministries, state forest agencies as well as non-governmental organisations, e.g. organisations representing forestry, conservationists and environmentalists, hunters, science, and forest industry (Elasser 2007; BfN 2001). The planning process of the nfp was institutionalized outside the ministry in a national round table (Schanz 2002). All actors were encouraged to participate actively and to contribute their positions through verbal or written statements (Hofmann & Liss 2001; BfN 2001) (Hofmann & Liss 2001). Due to the large number of participants, 35-50 representatives, during the round table meetings the discussions were ineffective (Hofmann & Liss 2001). The participants disapproved of opening the process of

the nfp to the general public (Elasser 2007). The BML acted simultaneously as an actor, moderator and authority through the first phase of the nfp (Hofmann & Liss 2001). Hofmann and Liss (2001) argue that the ministry was biased in several issues.

The second phase of the nfp lasted from 2001 to 2003. To preserve divergent opinions and a wider representation the nfp underwent modifications (Howlett & Rayner 2006b). The BML reacted to the critique of the first phase of the process by letting an independent moderator chairing the round table meetings (Winkel & Sotirov 2011). The German Federal Government (2003) argues that a transparency of the nfp-process was reached along with a high level of involvement and participation of the forest actors within the preparation of the round table meetings. By September 2003 182 policy proposals were produced and recommended by more than 80 forest actors, including topics concerning international cooperation and international trade (Winkel & Sotirov 2011; German Federal Government 2003). The policy recommendations were addressed to stakeholders and authorities (German Federal Government 2003). Along with the proposals key forest policy statements on fields of action were made (German Federal Government 2003). From 2004 to 2006 the nfp was scientifically evaluated, the report by Elsasser and Liss (2004 in Winkel & Sotirov 2011 p.146) indicated that the forest actors appreciated the communication process within the nfp and favoured a continuation of the program. The report also highlighted that *limited effects were observed in terms of commitment and the implementation of the policy recommendations* (Winkel & Sotirov 2011 p.146). To focus further discussions regarding the implementation of the policy proposals a small steering group consisting of selected actors was established (Winkel & Sotirov 2011). The steering group presented eleven key recommendations at the 18th round table meeting, which led to intense discussions about implementation. The discussions led to a confrontation between the environmental NGOs and other forest actors who were not willing to entering such a commitment (Winkel & Sotirov 2011). Accordingly some of the most influential environmental NGOs left the nfp (Winkel & Sotirov 2011).

After the confrontation the nfp moved into a third phase where the decision making processes and implementation phase of the nfp became explicitly excluded from the programme by the BML (Winkel & Sotirov 2011; Swedish Forest Agency 2013b). Instead the nfp was framed as a panel of forest actors that are formulating policy recommendations (Winkel & Sotirov 2011). The German nfp process ended in 2007 after only two panel meetings (Winkel & Sotirov 2011). Today the nfp process does not play any role in German forest policy (Winkel & Sotirov 2011).

The Austrian, Finnish and German national forest programmes are all characterized by participation, mainly, from expert administrators and professional stakeholders. The Austrian programme also had representation from elected representatives. The Austrian and Finnish programme also let the public participate in various ways. The Finnish nfp has been most ambitious, in this regard, by carrying out an extensive number of public hearings. On the other hand, Primmer and Kyllönen (2006) stated that the hearings did not function as an arena for expressing new interests, but served as a legitimizing element.

The depth and scope of the programmes has, as in theory, fluctuated within the processes. In the case of Finland and Austria it is because the programme consists of different groups. The number of participants and type of participants has varied within the groups, as well as the different groups' function as collaborative, consultative or contractual. In Germany where the programme only consisted of a round table, the variation of depth and scope of participation depended on the process' different phases. In the implementation phase a smaller council was

formed in order to prioritize among the policy proposals. In the end the round table lost their decision making power and functioned, merely, as a consultative council. The Finnish round table has been consultative since the start of the nfp. While, the Austrian programme should be considered as collaborative since it constitute as a framework for concrete forest policy measures. In the Finnish and Austrian nfps the coordination groups and working groups has had a consultative relationship with the round table, as they have made proposals on the programme's content and priority setting.

In addition to the incorporation of professional stakeholder, there are other elements legitimizing the nfps. Austria focused on independent moderators in all participatory activities. Germany let an independent moderator chair the round table during the second phase of the nfp. Despite the collapse of the programme's implementation phase, the second phase of the nfp should be considered as successful since the actors appreciated the dialogue process. The Finnish nfp, as mentioned above, has been legitimized by the public participation.

The initiation of the European nfps can be attributed to international commitments. This confirms the theory that international commitments affect national policy. The international community has viewed nfps as instruments for implementing international agreements at a national level. Aside from that the different countries has considered the IPF requirements, it is often unclear which other conventions or agreements that has been implemented. The Austrian, Finnish and German nfp has instead focused on national issues. It seems like the German programme barely considered international issues or agreements at all, apart from the forest policy proposal concerning international trade and cooperation. The Austrian national forest programme has defined principles and objectives, but they constitute only a minor part of the programme. The Finnish nfp is the most ambitious, in this sense, concerning the work on international aspects. Their effort is not just about implementing international regimes but also monitoring and influencing ongoing policy processes at the international, EU and pan-European arena. Both Finland and Austria are promoting a legally binding convention on forests. This, together, demonstrates the national policy's broadening to a multi-level context.

The reasons why Austria and Germany has chosen not to focus that much on international issues is difficult to speculate about. One possible reason is the lack of willingness and interest among the national actors in discussing these issues since they are busy with the national context. As an authority steering the nfp towards a greater focus on international issues and agreements is risky, since it could reduce the actors' acceptance of the programme. It is also clear from the objectives of the German and Austrian nfp that they primarily aim to create consensus among national actors.

Participation and integration of international agreements in a Swedish nfp

In general the perception among the interviewed forest actors in Sweden, except ENGOs, is that there is a need for a national forest programme. Reasons for the need of an nfp are justified in different ways. Interviewees from the forest industry, forest owners and science refer to an destructive atmosphere of debate that has characterized the Swedish forest policy lately. They highlight that there are many different perspectives when it comes to forests and assume that an nfp would support a dialogue between the actors.

We have come into a bit unfortunate debate atmosphere, as I feel it. A part of the debate atmosphere is that we have so incredibly different views on the world and the reality in the woods. [...] It is pretty destructive to talk at cross-purposes all the time, and I believe we are doing that now. So, I think the national forest programme has an important role.– Forest owner

The authorities argue in a similar way, highlighting that there are conflicts and an nfp might be the right arena to resolve these. They assume that complicated forest issues needs to be addressed in a more holistic way and that an nfp, allowing participation of different actors, will contribute to this.

I think such a programme [a national forest programme] can, in an efficient way, work systematically to ensure that any claims made on the forest can be met in the best way possible from a holistic perspective.
- Authority

One of the issues that would need the support from an nfp is the equated goals of production and environment. From the view of a forest owner interviewee, there is so far no means identified how to cope with this equation.

In contrast to many of the stakeholders interviewed, ENGOS don't see a need for an nfp. They fear that the proposed programme is too vague, and argue that Sweden needs a new forestry act rather an national forest programme. So the argument is that hierarchical new regulations would help to improve the forest situation in Sweden much better. Despite the general hesitation of ENGOS about the need of an nfp, they do not neglect the role of an nfp as a way forward.

Forest industry and science interviewees argue that international issues are a reason for Sweden's need for a national forest programme. They assume that an nfp can serve as a forum for these matters.

In general the Swedish actors are positive towards participating in an nfp and identify different roles in the process. The only exceptions are ENGOS. The forest industry clearly state that they want to participate and emphasize, unanimously, that they do not have any reservations for participating in an nfp.

You cannot put any preconditions for participation [in an nfp]. To stay on the sidelines in this kind of process, then you are depriving yourself the possibility to influence, you cannot do that. I would say that there are not any preconditions. – Forest industry

The forest owners as well emphasize their willingness to participate in an nfp and state that they do not have any prerequisites for participation. However, they express their interest in being involved in the design of the process layout. Authorities are also positive towards participating in an nfp, not least by providing data and material. They point out that they cannot have any reservations for participation since they are working for the government. Science interviewees state as well that they will gladly participate in the programme. They justify their role in the process similar to the authority interviewees in providing services, in case of the scientists by transferring or retrieving knowledge. One interviewee representing science points out that their precondition for participation is that they will not be seen as anything else than a knowledge broker and that their role is to stand for objectivity and impartiality.

The ENGOS are, however, more skeptical about participating in an nfp. They justify their skepticism by the vagueness of the programme where clear objective are missing, as well as a time plan. The interviewees further stress the need for a balanced and equal nfp when it comes to participation of different actors. In addition they believe that a national forest programme should lead to a new forest policy by leading to or be a part of a forest policy inquiry. Consequently ENGOS regard an nfp as a programme with a specific goal, in form of a new regulation, rather than a dialogue process or a forum for improving the debate atmosphere in the forest policy area.

All actors, except for one of the ENGOs, are supporting the idea of establishing a forest council. The ENGO interviewee does not want to say anything about the organisations' standpoint at this stage. The interviewee, however, mentions that they have been informed by their key contacts at the Ministry of Rural Affairs that they will be invited to the Forest Council. They state that they will participate at the meeting the 27th of May 2014. It is clear that the issue is sensitive and it is linked to their hesitation towards participating in an nfp.

The scope of participation

The interviewed actors want what they call a “broad participation”, Table 10. This includes participants that can be categorized as authorities, science, private sector, forest owners, NGOs and others. The interviewed ENGOs did not mention any science actors. Science interviewees on the other and did not mention any participants that could be categorized as others. The authority and forest industry are both focusing on the future use of the forests and believe that innovation and organizations that can facilitate product development should be part of the programme, e.g. the innovation agency Vinnova. Furthermore, the industry calls attention to the participation of politics, science and all kind of forest based value chains, in its entirety. This view is supported by the forest owners. One forest owner interviewee highlights that the inclusion of NGOs are needed in an nfp to gain acceptance from society. Both the forest industry and ENGOs point out that outdoor recreation should be represented in a forest programme. The ENGOs push that in addition to the forest industry, all stakeholders using forest ecosystem services should be part of an nfp. Also, science representatives argue that a broad participation is one of the main points with a national forest programme. However, they state that without making priorities there will be both difficulties and challenges with such an approach.

Since it is named the national forest programme it must involve the national interests. The problem is that there are so very many. It becomes difficult to handle as there are so many stakeholders who represent diverse interests ranging from the direct forest ownership [...] to pure ideological movements that lack personal responsibility [...] but have a lot of opinions. So, there lies a real challenge. – Science

Table 10. Mentioned nfp participants by the different actors

	Forest industries	Forest Owners	ENGOs	Authorities	Science
Authorit ies	Civil servants	County Administrative Boards of Sweden	Authorities of cultural history	Civil servants	Authorities of rural area
	The Government	Government agencies	Authorities of environment	County Administrative Boards of Sweden	Authorities of education
	Government Offices of Sweden	Ministers	Authorities of forests	The Government	Authorities of enterprise
	Infrastructure and transport authorities	Ministry of Education and Research	The Government	The Migration Board	Authorities of environment
	Ministers	Ministry of Rural Affairs	Health authorities	Ministry of Culture	County Administrative Boards of Sweden
	Minister for Finance	Politicians	Industry authorities	Ministry of Rural Affairs	Government Offices of Sweden
	Minister of Rural Affairs	Swedish Forest Agency	Minister of Rural Affairs	Ministry of the Environment	Minister of Rural Affairs
	Ministries		Ministry of the Environment	Municipalities	Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications
	Ministry of Finance		Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and	The National Board of Health and Welfare	Ministry of the Environment

			Communications		
	Ministry of the Environment		Ministry of Rural Affairs	Representative from the political executive	Ministry of Rural Affairs
	Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications		Schools	Schools	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
	Ministry of Rural Affairs		Swedish Environmental Protection Agency	Swedish Board of Agriculture	Swedish Forest Agency
	Politicians		Swedish Forest Agency	Swedish Energy Agency	
	Port authorities			Swedish Environmental Protection Agency	
	Prime minister			Swedish Forest Agency	
	Swedish Energy Agency			The Swedish National Agency for Education	
	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency			The Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning	
	Swedish Forest Agency			Vinnova	
	The Swedish Research Council Formas				
	The Swedish Transport Administration				
	Tax authorities				
	Vinnova				
	Working environment authorities				
Science	Science	Future Forests		Science	Science
		Science		Stockholm Environment Institute	
		Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences		Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	
		Universities			
Private sector	Chemical industry	Business	Experiential tourism	Forestry	Energy industry
	Forest industry	Chemical industry	Forest industry	Forest industry	Forest industry
	Forestry	Construction industry	Forestry		Forestry
	Future industrial users of forest	Energy industry	Nature tourism		Future industrial users of forest
	Port organisation	Forest industry	Tourism industry		Swedish Association of Architects
	Preem	Forest related industry			Swedish Forest Industries Federation
	Textile industry	Forestry			
	Tourism industry	Fuel industry			
	Train operators	Mining industry			
		Reindeer herding sector			
		Tourism industry			

Forest owners	Forest owners	Family forest owners	Forest owners	Family forest owners	Family forest owners
		Forest owners		The Federation of Swedish Farmers	The Federation of Swedish Farmers
				Forest owners	Forest Owners
				Large forest owners	
				Mellanskog	
NGOs	ENGOS	ENGOS	Cultural heritage interests	ENGOS	ENGOS
	Outdoor recreation association	NGOs	ENGOS	Svenskt Friluftsliv	Hunters
		Social NGOs	Folklore societies	Swedish Society for Nature Conservation	Swedish Society for Nature Conservation
		Svenskt Friluftsliv	Social NGOs	Outdoor recreation association	Outdoor recreation association
			Outdoor recreation association		
			Orienteers		
Others	Certification organisations	The public	Independent process manager	The public	
	Forestry employees	Unions	Mushroom and berry foragers		
	FSC				
	Local actors				
	PEFC				
	The public				
	Samí				
	Unions				

The actors consider the following actors as key participants in a national forest programme: the Government, the Minister of Rural Affairs, Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Rural Affairs, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, Swedish Forest Agency, science, forest industries, forestry, tourism industry, forest owners, family forest owners, ENGOS, outdoor recreation association and the public, Table 11. Even though the public is considered as a key participant, the actors believe that it should be represented by interest groups or politicians, p. 39.

Table 11. Mentioned nfp participants by the actors. Participants in bold are mentioned by ≥ 3 actors, organisations in italics are mentioned by 1 actor

Authorities	Science	Private sector	Forest owners	NGOs	Other
The Government	Science	Forest industries	Forest owners	ENGOS	The public
Minister of Rural Affairs	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	Forestry	Family forest owners	Outdoor recreation association	Independent process manager
Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications	<i>Future Forests</i>	Tourism industry	The Federation of Swedish Farmers	Social NGOs	Unions
Ministry of the Environment	<i>Stockholm Environment Institute</i>	Chemical industry	<i>Large forest owners</i>	Swedish Society for Nature Conservation	<i>Certification organisations</i>
Ministry of Rural Affairs	<i>Universities</i>	Energy industry	<i>Mellanskog</i>	Svenskt Friluftsliv	<i>Forestry employees</i>
Swedish Environmental		Future industrial users of forests		<i>Cultural heritage interests</i>	<i>FSC</i>

Protection Agency					
Swedish Forest Agency		<i>Business</i>		<i>Folklore societies</i>	<i>Local actors</i>
Authorities of environment		<i>Construction industry</i>		<i>Hunters</i>	<i>Mushroom and berry foragers</i>
County Administrative Boards of Sweden		<i>Experiential tourism</i>		<i>NGOs</i>	<i>PEFC</i>
Civil servants		<i>Forest related industry</i>		<i>Orienteers</i>	<i>Sámi</i>
Government Offices of Sweden		<i>Fuel industry</i>			
Ministers		<i>Mining industry</i>			
Politicians		<i>Nature tourism</i>			
Swedish Energy Agency		<i>Port organisation</i>			
Schools		<i>Preem</i>			
Authorities of cultural history		<i>Reindeer herding sector</i>			
Authorities of education		<i>Swedish Association of Architects</i>			
Authorities of enterprise		<i>Swedish Forest Industries Federation</i>			
Authorities of forests		<i>Textile industry</i>			
Authorities of rural area		<i>Train operators</i>			
Government agencies					
Health Authorities					
Industry authorities					
Infrastructure and transport authorities					
The Migration Board					
Minister for Finance					
Ministry of Culture					
Ministry of Education and Research					
Ministry of Finance					
Municipalities					
The National Board of Health and Welfare					
Port authorities					
Prime minister					
Representative from the political executive					
Swedish Board of Agriculture					
The Swedish National Agency for Education					
The Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning					
The Swedish Research Council					

<i>Formas</i>					
<i>The Swedish Transport Administration</i>					
<i>Tax authorities</i>					
<i>Vinnova</i>					
<i>Working environment authorities</i>					

The most mentioned nfp participants by the interviewees are all key participants: Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Rural Affairs, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, Swedish Forest Agency, science, forest industries, forestry, forest owners, ENGOs and outdoor recreation association, Table 12.

Table 12. Mentioned nfp participants by the interviewees. Participants in bold are mentioned by ≥ 6 interviewees, organisations in italics are mentioned by 1 interviewee

Authorities	Science	Private sector	Forest owners	NGOs	Other
Ministry of the Environment	Science	Forest industries	Forest owners	ENGOs	Independent process manager
Ministry of Rural Affairs	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	Forestry	Family forest owners	Outdoor recreation association	The Public
Swedish Environmental Protection Agency	<i>Future Forests</i>	Chemical industry	The Federation of Swedish Farmers	NGOs	Unions
Swedish Forest Agency	<i>Stockholm Environment Institute</i>	Energy industry	<i>Large forest owners</i>	Social NGOs	<i>Certification organisations</i>
Authorities of environment	<i>Universities</i>	Future industrial users of forests	<i>Mellanskog</i>	Swedish Society for Nature Conservation	<i>Forestry employees</i>
Civil servants		Textile industry		Svenskt Friluftsliv	<i>FSC</i>
County Administrative Boards of Sweden		Tourism industry		<i>Cultural heritage interests</i>	<i>Local actors</i>
The Government		<i>Business</i>		<i>Folklore societies</i>	<i>Mushroom and berry foragers</i>
Government agencies		<i>Construction industry</i>		<i>Hunters</i>	<i>PEFC</i>
Government Offices of Sweden		<i>Experiential tourism</i>		<i>Orienteers</i>	<i>Sámi</i>
Infrastructure and transport authorities		<i>Forest related industry</i>			
Minister of Rural Affairs		<i>Fuel industry</i>			
Ministers		<i>Mining industry</i>			
Ministry of Finance		<i>Nature tourism</i>			
Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications		<i>Port organisation</i>			
Politicians		<i>Preem</i>			
Swedish Energy Agency		<i>Reindeer herding sector</i>			
Schools		<i>Swedish Association of Architects</i>			
Vinnova		<i>Swedish Forest Industries Federation</i>			
<i>Authorities of</i>		<i>Train operators</i>			

<i>cultural history</i>					
<i>Authorities of education</i>					
<i>Authorities of enterprise</i>					
<i>Authorities of forests</i>					
<i>Authorities of rural area</i>					
<i>Health Authorities</i>					
<i>Industry authorities</i>					
<i>The Migration Board</i>					
<i>Minister for Finance</i>					
<i>Ministry of Culture</i>					
<i>Ministry of Education and Research</i>					
<i>Municipalities</i>					
<i>The National Board of Health and Welfare</i>					
<i>Port authorities</i>					
<i>Prime minister</i>					
<i>Representative from the political executive</i>					
<i>Swedish Board of Agriculture</i>					
<i>The Swedish National Agency for Education</i>					
<i>The Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning</i>					
<i>The Swedish Research Council Formas</i>					
<i>The Swedish Transport Administration</i>					
<i>Tax authorities</i>					
<i>Working environment authorities</i>					

Interviewees highlight that participation in an nfp should be cross-sectoral. Authorities believe that it is the very finesse of an nfp, focusing on forests' importance for sustainable development. Forest owners argue that other sectors preferably should be in the working groups of an nfp. Forest industry, forest owners, authorities and science state that it is crucial to include the future users of forests, e.g. chemistry industry and innovation facilitators. Forest owners, authorities and science state that the programme also should be multi-level, including sub-national levels.

The Forest Industry stress that an nfp should not only be a matter for the Ministry of Rural Affairs, but also the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry for Finance. Ministries and government agencies managing infrastructure, taxation, work environment, transports and ports should also participate in the programme. Among the government agencies the Swedish Forest Agency, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, Vinnova and the Swedish

Research Council Formas are explicitly mentioned. The forest owners emphasize that politicians, represented by ministries, must be involved in an nfp. They mention that the Ministry of Rural Affairs, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications need to be part of the programme. They also believe that the Swedish Forest Agency, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the County Administrative Boards of Sweden should be represented. One of the authority interviewees emphasize that the Swedish Forest Agency and the Swedish Board of Agriculture should be part of an nfp. Representatives from municipalities and counties should also participate. They can weigh interests of forests against other interests on a local and regional level, a knowledge lacking at the national level. The other authority representative mentions the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Swedish Energy Agency, the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, but also the the Migration Board and the National Board of Health and Welfare. Among the ministries the Ministry of Rural Affairs and the Ministry of the Environment are seen as obvious participants. The Ministry of Culture could be included if you are looking at the forest from a cultural heritage perspective.

One of the ENGOs regards it as important that an nfp is governed by a ministry. The Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communication are seen as important participants, in addition to the Ministry of Rural Affairs. Furthermore government agencies that are governing environmental, forest, enterprise, health and historic environment issues should be part of the nfp, if it is to have a broad approach. Researchers argue that the Swedish Forest Agency and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency are unquestioned participants of the nfp, perhaps also the County Boards should be included. Also, the Ministry of Rural Affairs, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communication are mentioned as actors. The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education and Research are stated as possible participants. One of the representatives of Science underlines, at the same time that an nfp will not work if all Sweden's ministries and government agencies shall take part of the programme.

All interviewees state that the public is best represented by different interest groups, politicians and government agencies. However, there are interviewees from the forest industry and authority mentioning that the public could participate through commenting and providing suggestions via web portals or social media. The public could also participate through surveys or focus groups. Interviewees from authorities highlight that it is essential to give the public the opportunity to follow an nfp process.

Forest council

The participation in the forest council appears as a much more sensitive issue than the general participation in an nfp. Many of the interviewees avoided details in these matters. Those providing details, e.g. one interviewee of the forest industry argues that the council should consist of representatives from ministries, e.g. political participation, science and forest industry along with other interested actors. Also, one of the forest owners does not want to specify the constitution of the Forest Council. In the end, the representative refers to the actors in the Forest Kingdom paired with the involvement of ENGOs could constitute the forest council. The other forest owner interviewee stresses that it is absolutely essential to include forest owners, forest industry and ENGOs. The ENGOs have the broadest view on participation in the forest council. They argue that the whole forest sector should participate by including forestry, forest industries, forest owners, ENGOs, cultural heritage interests, outdoor recreation and perhaps even the eco-tourism organisations. One of the authority interviewees states that it is for the government to decide who should be included in the

council. The other authority mentions the Ministry of Rural Affairs, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Swedish Forest Agency, science, environmental movement, large and small forest owners, and an outdoor recreation organization as potential members of the forest council. The research institutes consider the forest owners to be important participants of the council as well as the forest industry, science, governmental agencies and NGOs. Table 13.

One forest industry - and one authority interviewee argue that the forest council should not consist of more than 10-12 different actors.

Table 13. Mentioned forest council participants by the actors

	Forest industries	Forest Owners	ENGOS	Authorities	Science
Authorities	Ministries		Swedish Environmental Protection Agency	Ministry of Rural Affairs	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
			Swedish Forest Agency	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency	Swedish Forest Agency
				Swedish Forest Agency	
Science	Science			Science	Science
Private sector	Forest industries	Forest industries	Forestry		Swedish Forest Industries Federation
			Forest industries		
Forest owners		Forest Owners	Private forest owners		The Federation of Swedish Farmers
					Forest owners
NGOs		ENGOS	ENGOS	ENGOS	ENGOS
			Outdoor recreation associations	Outdoor recreation associations	Hunters
					Outdoor recreation associations
					Swedish Society for Nature Conservation

Table 14. The actors' view on the forthcoming national forest programme's scope of participation

	Expert administrators	Elected representatives	Professional stakeholders	Lay stakeholders	Random selection	Open, targeted recruiting	Open, self-selection	Diffuse public sphere
Authorities	X	X	X				(x)	
Science	X	X	X				(x)	
Forest Industries	X	X	X				(x)	
Forest Owners	X	X	X				(x)	
ENGOS	X	X	X					

Within the forest council actors ask for participation from expert administrators, elected representatives and professional stakeholders.

The depth of participation

Interviewees from the forest industry, forest owners, ENGOS and authorities believe that an nfp should be consultative and thus, form the basis for policy decisions. Industry and forest owner interviewees find that those who are directly affected, i.e. bearing costs, must have a say in this policy-making process. The ENGOS and authorities state that it is very important to make clear for the actors why they have been invited to the process, and their opportunities to influence and make decisions. The responses from the interviews with science actors, did not match any of the categories of depth of participation. One of the interviewees says that participation in an nfp should force various stakeholders to work together rather than just debating with each other.

The forest industry believes that there will be hard to reach consensus in all issues, and therefore is important to clarify how decision making processes should be handled within the programme. This view is shared by the forest owners. Forest owners also argue that an nfp should function as an arena to identify and solve conflicts with room for scientific investigations. When consensus is not possible to reach, then politicians should take over.

There is always good if you can reach consensus, but there are so many actors with so different starting points so it will not be possible. Therefore, one cannot build a system in which it is assumed that there will be consensus on issues. It must be clearly stated who has the mandate to put the foot down. Then you have to have confidence in that they are listening to those who are invited to speak on these matters and take their opinions on board. – Forest owner

Neither ENGOS believe that it will be possible to reach consensus, ultimately politicians need to make decisions. ENGOS highlight that a strive for consensus may result in watered down agreements.

Different opinions must be recognized [in an nfp], otherwise it makes no sense. Then we will find ourselves at a level where everyone says that trees are nice, and there's nothing more to it. – ENGO

Also authorities believe that it is important with a political leadership within an nfp, who can step in where consensus cannot be reached. There are no results to report from science.

Actors do not believe that participants should have the same role within a national forest programme. Forest industry, forest owners and authorities state that the role of government agencies and science should be supportive and investigative in nature, e.g. impact assessments. The ENGOS state that it is difficult for government agencies to participate in a policy-making process since their task is to manage existing policy. One ENGO interviewee

thinks that the responsibility of good process management and programme design rests on the Government Offices of Sweden. Also industry and authority interviewees believe that the process should be run by the government offices. One of the authority interviewees finds that those who own the forests are directly affected. Other actors cannot make any direct claims on the forest but can point out the resources' many opportunities. This view is, hardly surprising, also expressed by parts of the forest industry and forest owners. At the same time the forest owners underline the importance of giving all actors the same opportunities to share their opinions in an equal manner, in order to avoid dropouts from the programme. This position is shared by the ENGOs and is seen as an important way of getting a broader scope of a national forest programme. The ENGOs state that inequality has been a problem in other participatory processes they have been active in. They also have experienced a lack of understanding by the authorities concerning this issue.

The role of other sectors has not consistently been highlighted by the actors. A science interviewee highlights that actors from other sectors have a key role in a national forest programme since they can help with a more pragmatic view on how forest issues can be resolved. As mentioned previously, actors consider the role of the public is to be represented by politicians, authorities and interest organisations.

Well of course, I'm thinking out loud now, from the perspective of forming a strategy and targets for how to use and develop our Swedish forest and what it can give, then it is clear that there is a classic forest sector today, but other sectors are perhaps a part of tomorrow's users of forests. – Forest industry

Forest council

Interviewees agree on that it is the government that should decide on who should be included in the forest council. Forest industry interviewees emphasize that it is the three ministries, Ministry of Rural Affairs, Ministry of the Environment and Ministry of Enterprise, who should have this discretion while forest owners and science state that the decision power should, solely, rest with the Ministry of Rural Affairs. One authority interviewee argues that the Government should appoint the members of the council personally. Thus the council would carry more weight and status. Moreover, an appointment would commit to active participation in the forest council and give the continuity needed to have any effect.

The actors do not agree on who should lead the forest council, among forest owners, authorities and science the opinions differ between interviewees. The forest industry would like a minister as a chairman. One of the forest owner interviewees agree while the other one would prefer the Swedish Forest Agency to take the lead of the council, due to their vast knowledge and experience of different forest actors. ENGO interviewees indicate that the political weight of a minister is good, but questions at the same time how operative this would be. They therefore prefer an external process leader. Even authorities give different answers where one of the interviewees state that the Ministry of Rural Affairs should lead the forest council, while the other gives a more vague answer where whoever the government appoints should lead the forest council, with the precondition that he/she represent the political leadership or have close ties to it. One science interviewee suggests that the Minister of Rural Affairs should lead the forest council. The interviewee stresses that the Ministry of Rural Affairs' nomination must be based on a dialogue with forest owners, forest industry and ENGOs. The other science interviewee prefers, as the ENGOs, an external and neutral chairman.

Integration of international issues and agreements

All actors agree that international forest issues should be addressed within the context of the national forest programme. Some actors argue it is inevitable since forest issues already are international in character, e.g. ENGOs and authorities refer to policy processes in the EU and Pan-Europe i.e. EU timber regulation and the LBA process. While, other actors point out that the Swedish forest is hardly an isolated phenomenon.

I also believe that there is a global forest issue which, if one is to be a little solemn, has a bearing on a national forest programme. I personally think that to utilize [forest] and to utilize the global forest in a sustainable manner is important for the survival of Earth. For this reason, it is obviously very important [to include international forest issues in an nfp].- Authority

All actors agree that a national forest programme must relate to existing international agreements. The forest industry, forest owners and authorities argue that a national forest programme can serve as a forum for national stakeholders to monitor and discuss ongoing international policy processes, in which the government needs to take a stand. These actors also argue that an nfp should identify which conventions and agreements we are committed to, and when needed act to amend these or enter into new ones.

The forest industry, forest owners and authorities provide suggestions on how the nfp could integrate international agreements and issues. The forest industry state that experts within the ministry should work on these matters and then present the findings to the forest council.

Forest owners state that the international issues are so important that they might need to be covered by a working group. Since the questions are complex, specialist competence is needed. The authorities indicate that international questions should be managed by the secretariat. The secretariat should work on identifying and monitor different conventions, while the forest council may decide whether working groups should be appointed to handle specific issues.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to assess the stakeholders' acceptance of participation and integration of international issues within the Swedish national forest programme. Based on the concept of governance the research questions posed focused on the Swedish actors' perceptions of the scope and depth of participation in an nfp as well as the integration of international issues.

This chapter will start with a discussion of the findings in the light of European nfps and existing research. Then the use of theory and methods will be addressed. The chapter ends with the study's conclusions.

Discussion of the findings

The perceived need for an nfp is justified by interviewees due to the harsh atmosphere of debate in Swedish forest policy. Authorities state that an nfp could work as an area for resolving conflicts, but also stress the need for a programme to provide basis for policy decisions. This indicates that the conflicts between forest policy actors are serious and difficult to resolve. Meanwhile, environmental organizations have a cautious attitude to an nfp, since they are afraid of wasting their time on a new dialogue process that might not lead to a substantial change in forest governance. The theory emphasizes that forest policy making can regulate conflicts of interests, this has been stated goals of the German and Austrian nps. The Swedish actors' willingness to participate meets Elsasser's (2002) precondition of interest to participate. Voluntary participation is highlighted as well in the German and Austrian nfps.

How actors perceive the scope of participation in a national forest programme

All interviewed actors state that an nfp should include expert administrators, elected representatives and professional stakeholders. The public can be included to some extent and in certain contexts. The Swedish actors hold, like the German, a skeptical stance towards increasing the scope of participation to include the public. The Finnish and Austrian nfps carried out e.g. public sessions to involve citizens, and thus allowed an open, self-selection participation. However, the Finnish forest programme highlights the importance of clarifying the purpose and conditions of public participation. Primmer and Kyllönen (2006) pointed out that the Finnish hearings did not generate new information or interests. As Fung (2006) state these citizens rarely represent the opinions of the public. To avoid this one could use targeted recruiting or random selection. The theory stresses that different scopes and depths of participation is valid in different contexts (Barreteau et al. 2010). This demonstrates the importance of a clear programme structure in order to determine who and in what way actors should participate.

Forest industries and forest owners argue that actors active in the forests' different value chains should participate. As the actors want to focus on the future use of forests, this statements is not unexpected. Authorities also emphasize the importance of involving these actors. However, they as well stress the need to include various NGOs in an nfp. Given the equated goals of production and environment this statement is hardly surprising. ENGOS stress that alternative users, e.g. nature tourism organizations, should participate in an nfp. As nature tourism use forests in a different manner than forestry and forest industries, this could highlight conflicts between commercial actors. Stressing the different actor groups forestry stakeholders and nature conservation stakeholders follows the inherent conflict between production and protection in forest policy (see Eckerberg & Sandström 2013).

Stakeholders mentioned by the actors as important participants of the nfp can be categorized as being traditionally involved with forest policy issues in Sweden. The exception is the outdoor recreation organizations and the tourism industry, which are not commonly viewed as traditional forest actors. The focus on recreational actors has probably emerged after media articles about forestry's lack of consideration of recreational values.

Interviewees believe that only traditional actors should participate in the forest council: forest industries, forest owners, ENGOs, authorities and science. Also the Finnish forest council consisted only of traditional stakeholders. This can be viewed as a cementation of already existing power coalitions within Swedish forest governance. This finding supports earlier research from Voitleithner (2002) arguing that Austria's nfp was limited by the country's strong relationships between lobbyists and forest authorities.

How actors perceive the depth of participation in a national forest programme

The interviewees argue that an nfp should be consultative and form the basis for policy decisions taken by politics. Consultative participation has functioned well in Finland, whereas the German programme collapsed. The success of the Finnish forest programme can be interpreted as the result of strong governmental representation. The German nfp was missing a clear mandate. Among the interviewed actors political involvement is seen as crucial for the implementation of the programme, which probably has to do with their wish for an nfp to function as a basis for political decisions. This is in line with most of the interviewees' wish for a forest council led by an elected representative or expert administrator. Beyond providing stability the involvement of elected representatives is regarded as a way of increasing the legitimacy of the nfp (Elsasser 2002).

A consultative nfp does not differ much from the collaborative decision making of Swedish forest governance of today. The difference would be that the forest stakeholders, legitimately, would work closely to the political power. This could increase the depth of participation for the actors in the forest council.

How actors perceive the integration of international issues and agreements in a national forest programme

All actors agree that international issues should be addressed within an nfp, which some of the actors justify by the international character of forest issues. This demonstrates the multi-level character of modern forest policies. The forest industry, forest owners and authorities argue that the nfp could be used as an arena for discussing and monitoring international policy processes, in which the government needs to take a stand. This shows the actors' desire to influence international processes and in some cases even counteract forest policies suggested by international actors. This is similar to the Finnish nfp's ambition of influencing international policy processes. National forest programmes can thus function in two directions, influencing and being influenced by the international arena.

The forest industry, forest owners and authorities all provided suggestions on how international agreements and issues could be integrated in an nfp. They all perceive that specialist expertise is needed, ideally from the ministry, i.e. expert administrators. This might indicate that the Swedish actor who actually has the power and influence in international affairs is the government and its authorities. This conclusion is supported by the theory that says that the most important linkage between different levels of governance is institutions (Peters & Pierre 2002).

During the interviews, no international organizations were mentioned as possible participants of an nfp. The actors focus on influencing international processes rather than being influenced by international organizations. This reflects that most of the interviewees represent organizations that are formed to defend and promote its members' interests rather than receiving opinions from outside the country.

Discussion of the use of theory

The study's theoretical framework highlighted that national policy making can be affected by actors on international and sub-national levels as well as by non-governmental actors. The different levels of scope and depth of participation created a valuable structure for analysis. This in turn made results and conclusions clearer.

Discussion of the empirical design's influence on the study

The use of a qualitative approach was justified in terms of the posed research questions.

The first phase of the study consisted of a literature review of European nfps. The study was adversely affected by the author's lack of knowledge of German and Finnish, why original nfp evaluation reports could not be used. Some of the reports published in German are covered by the policy intelligence report conducted by the Swedish Forest Agency (see Swedish Forest Agency 2013 b), which made them accessible. Although this choice of method is sub-optimal; it was a cheap and efficient way to retrieve the information.

The second phase of the study comprised semi-structured telephone interviews. The method was experienced as simple, cheap and efficient. The low number of drop outs might also be an effect of telephone interviews being perceived as time efficient by the interviewees. However, the telephone interviews limited the author's ability to explain the different depths of participation. Any vague answers due to this was clarified by asking follow-up questions, since the interview were semi-structured. The limitations of a telephone interview could have been remedied by attaching an explanation of the depth of participation in an email sent prior the interview or by conducting the interview face to face. Out of these two alternatives an email is less time consuming.

It is possible that the saturation point was not reached, but the magnitude of the empirical data limited the opportunities for further interviews.

Since the interviews were conducted in Swedish, the findings and quotes have been translated into English. This might have affected or changed the meaning of the actors' claims.

Conclusion

First, the interviewed actors request a scope of participation including expert administrators, elected representatives and professional stakeholders. Secondly, the actors request a depth of participation which is consultative and form the basis for policy decisions by elected representatives. Thirdly, the interviewees agree that international issues and agreements should be addressed within the context of an nfp.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview guide

Introduction

- I. What is your name?
- II. What is your role in the organisation?
- III. How is your organisation tied to the developments of an nfp?
- IV. And what is your role in this development?

Part I: Participation

- I. Which actors do you think should be subject to an nfp?
 - Authorities
 - Non-state actors
 - The public
- II. Do you think other sectors apart from those with focus on forest should be represented in the nfp?
- III. From your opinion: how should participation take place in the nfp?
- IV. Do you think that all actors should have the same role?
 - Authorities
 - The public
 - Non-state actors from other sectors
- V. Is your organisation interested in participating in the nfp process?
- VI. What are the prerequisites for your organisation when participating in an nfp?
- VII. The Ministry of Rural Affairs has indicated that a steering committee or a so-called forest council will be established, would you support this idea?
- VIII. In case the forest council will be established, who should be part of this?
- IX. Who should decide who should be included in this committee?
- X. Should there be someone taking the lead of the committee? And if so, who should do that?

Part II: Integration of international agreements

- I. Do you think that international forest-related issues should be integrated into an nfp?
- II. There are a lot of ratified international agreements; do you think that the goals of the different international agreement should be integrated into an nfp?
- III. If so, do you have an idea of how the goals of the agreements could be integrated?

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