



Roundtable on Sustainable Forests

A Partnership for the Future

**Consultation to Guide the Preparation of the 2010
National Report on Sustainable Forests**

2007

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Available on line at www.sustainableforests.net

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Executive Summary

The Roundtable on Sustainable Forests is assessing lessons learned through the production of the *National Report on Sustainable Forests—2003* in order to assure the broad practical utility of the next national report, which will be published by the USDA Forest Service in 2010. The 2010 National Report must provide practical use to the stakeholder and decision-maker communities while also providing useful information to the general public. A team of Roundtable participants was created to consult forest stakeholders regarding what content and format of the 2010 National Report would meet their needs. This report summarizes the results of their consultation.

Invitations were sent by email to 2,439 forest stakeholders whose contact information was accessible through existing databases of forest stakeholders. A total of 280 individuals responded. The respondents come from all fifty states and represent interests and responsibilities at the local, regional, national, and international levels. The federal government was well represented, along with environmental organizations, state government, and academic institutions. Private development organizations, foundations, local government agencies, tribal governments, and biologists were less well represented in the responses. Statistical tests across different stakeholder groups did not indicate important variations in their responses.

This consultation demonstrated a broad interest and need for indicator information across the forest stakeholder community and a commitment to improving the sustainable management of the nation's forests based on receiving good information regarding trends and conditions. More than 75% of the respondents reported that they use indicator information for their work, with only 2% reporting they had no use for such information. A large proportion of the respondents (79%) have heard of or read parts of the 2003 National Report, though only 15% responded that they used the report to address their need for indicator information. This juxtaposition of high awareness and low perceived utility presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the development of the 2010 National Report.

Respondents identified certain criteria and indicators as providing greater practical value. At the same time, this consultation confirmed the need for some level of reporting on all of the indicators. Respondents indicate a preference for quantitative information wherever possible, but they are interested in receiving qualitative assessments for those indicators where quantitative data are not available. Forest health and disturbance information were identified as the highest priorities at the criterion and the indicator levels. Other priority indicators include the use of best management practices, land available for wood and wood product production, the extent and robustness of forest assessments, and the broader suite of values that make forests important to people. Resources available for the 2010 National Report should be allocated for better reporting on those indicators that most directly improve the nation's understanding and management of United States forests.

Regarding the format of the 2010 National Report, respondents want to see a simple and visually explicit format, and they want the ability to access and use the underlying data. Information in the report should be presented as graphs, maps, figures, and tables whenever possible, along with interpretive text. To increase the practical value of the 2010 National Report, respondents indicated the utility of finer spatial resolution of indicator information. Having information available at sub-national levels would greatly improve the relevance of the 2010 National Report for regional, state, and local interpretation and decision-making processes.

Respondents requested three types of summary information. They would like to see summary indices for each indicator relative to benchmarks, with an interpretation of trends over time for each indicator. They would also like to see integrated summaries across multiple indicators, and would ultimately like to see a summary sustainability index for forest health across all indicators. Finally, respondents stressed the need for a high-level executive summary that clearly interprets the long-term sustainability of U.S. forests based on the available information.

Background

In 1995, the United States and eleven other countries established the Montréal Process Criteria and Indicators (MPCI) for describing and measuring basic elements of sustainable forest management on a national basis. The MPCI are the reporting framework for the 2003 and 2010 National Reports on Sustainable Forests.¹ These national-level reports are intended to provide information on the condition of and trends of our nation's public and private forests and document the nation's progress toward sustainable forest management.

The *National Report on Sustainable Forests—2003* provided meaningful information with data that were available. The Roundtable on Sustainable Forests² is now assessing lessons learned from the production and use of the 2003 National Report in order to increase the completeness, clarity, and practical utility of the 2010 National Report. The Roundtable is an open and inclusive process of public and private organizations and individuals committed to the goal of sustainable forest management on public and private lands in the United States. The Roundtable has utilized multi-stakeholder dialogue as the primary vehicle for inquiry, input, and feedback. This process has created a culture of collaboration and shared learning on a subject that is often fraught with gridlock and controversy.

Goal and Objectives

The Roundtable has agreed to support the development of the 2010 National Report through a variety of activities, one of which is this consultation. The goal of the consultation was to identify priorities for the allocation of limited resources in ways that will maximize the provision of information and analytical products that stakeholders want and need. Specifically, the objectives of the consultation were to:

1. Identify the new types of data that should be collected;
2. Clarify the types of analyses and analytical products stakeholders would like to see; and
3. Understand what formats would facilitate access to and use of the 2010 National Report and associated data.

The consultation focused on capturing stakeholder experiences with the 2003 National Report and their opinion regarding which Montréal Process Indicators provide the greatest value for understanding and managing the sustainability of America's forests.

Consultation Team

The consultation team was composed of five persons. Dennis Grossman provided leadership for this effort. The other team members were: Paul Geissler, U.S. Geological Survey; Guy Robertson, USDA Forest Service; Susan Morré, Oregon State University; and Sarah Walen,

¹ The 2003 National Report is available at <http://www.fs.fed.us/research/sustain/>.

² See <http://www.sustainableforests.net> for more about the Roundtable on Sustainable Forests.

Meridian Institute. The team worked with the Roundtable's Core Group to set the objectives for this consultation and coordinated its work with the Forest Service to ensure the consultation provided practical and timely input for the development of the 2010 National Report.

Consultation Instrument

This consultation process was created to complete a quick assessment of stakeholder requirements for the development of the 2010 National Report. Due to budget and time constraints, the consultation team made pragmatic decisions regarding the number of stakeholders that could be contacted, the means of contact, the amount of information that could be gathered, and the level of analysis that could be completed.

General Approach

The team's challenge was to build a consultation instrument that would extract useful information from a highly variable audience that represents different backgrounds, variable levels of involvement in sustainable forest management, and a range of familiarity with sustainability criteria and indicators. It was determined that an efficient, web-based consultation instrument would optimize concerns about the resources available to the team and the amount of time that respondents could reasonably be expected to devote to the consultation.

The consultation was structured into three sections of increasing complexity. This structure allowed respondents the ability to stop and submit their answers whenever they had exhausted their knowledge, interest or time. Part I focused on background information about each respondent's organization, the geographic focus of their work, and other non-personal information that could help the team understand the breadth of stakeholder participation and determine any patterns concerning the respondent's level of familiarity and use of the 2003 National Report. Part II asked questions to determine what would make the 2010 National Report most useful for forest stakeholders. This section asked respondents to rate the importance of each of the seven Criteria for national reporting and the importance of each Criterion in helping them to carry out their work. Part III asked similar questions for each of the 64 indicators regarding their importance for national reporting and for carrying out the respondent's work.

The consultation instrument was built primarily with single response selection buttons and check boxes that facilitated quick responses and allowed the team to easily capture responses for analysis and interpretation. There were a limited number of open-ended questions where individual responses were entered in text boxes.³

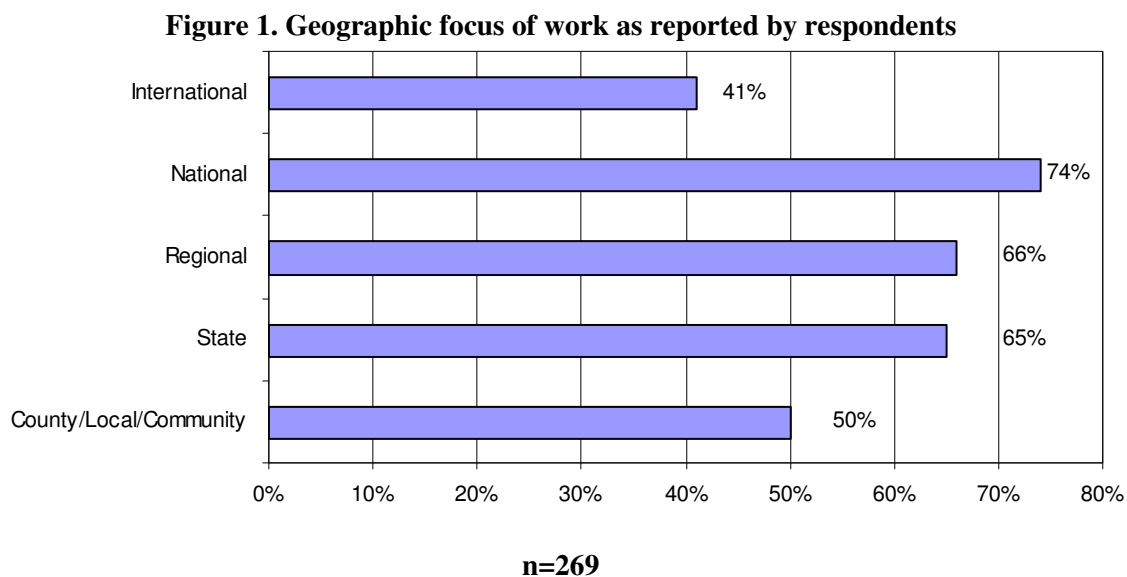
³. The Consultation Instrument is available on line as Appendix 1 to this report. All appendices are available on the Roundtable's website, <http://www.sustainableforests.net>. The appendices are not attached to this report because of the significant size of the files.

Characterizing Respondents

It is difficult to obtain a representative sample of potential users of the 2010 National Report. The consultation team evaluated current databases of forest stakeholders with email contact information. After evaluating the available databases and consulting with the Roundtable Core Group, the team selected the Meridian Institute Forest Stakeholder database, as well as lists provided by the National Woodland Owners Association (NWOA), the American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA), the Society of American Foresters (SAF), and selected individuals that helped to review the consultation instrument.

The consultation team assumed that organizations and individuals involved with forest issues in the past and who are willing to take the time to participate in this consultation are reasonably representative of those who would take the time to read and use the 2010 Report. There may be a desire to expand the audience for the 2010 Report to those who have not been involved with forest issues in the past, and these audiences may have different information needs.

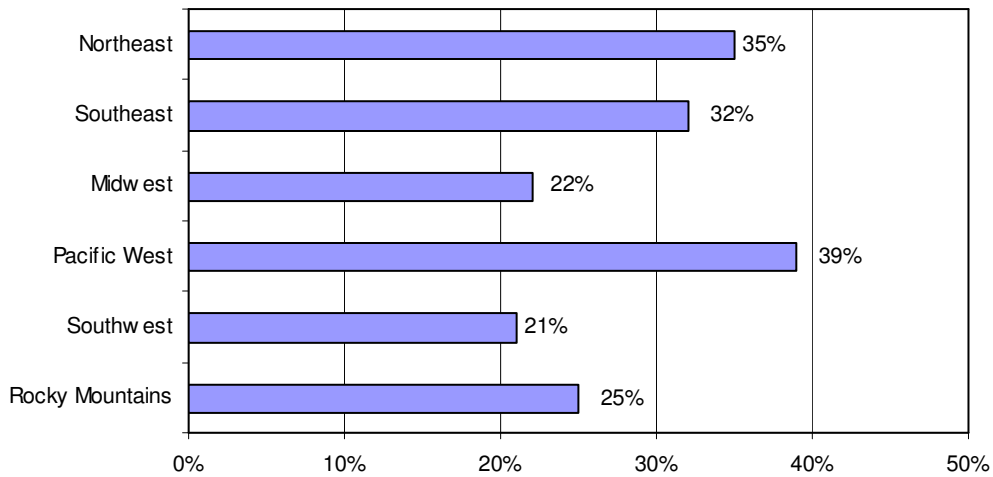
A total of 2,439 invitations were sent, and there were 280 responses (11.5% response rate). Responses were received from all 50 states.⁴ As can be seen in Figure 1, there was robust representation of organizations and individuals working at all geographic levels. Many respondents indicated that they work at multiple levels. Figure 2 shows that for those who work at the regional level, there was a robust distribution across the different regions, with the notable exception of the U.S.'s tropical and subtropical island commonwealths and affiliates.



⁴ The number of invitations and responses from the different database sources is as follows: Meridian Institute (2,311 invitations, 239 responses); NWOA (94 invitations, 17 responses); AF&PA (60 invitations, 11 responses); SAF (7 invitations, 2 two responses); consultation team and process reviewers (14 invitations, 11 responses).

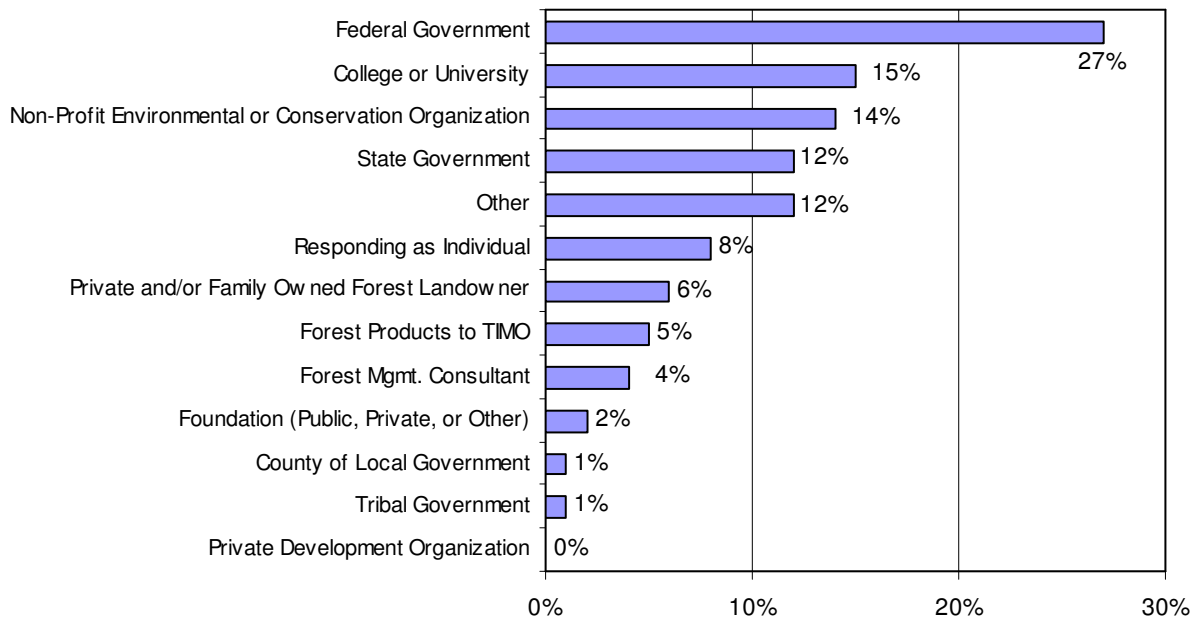
Figure 3 summarizes respondents' characterization of their organizational type. The federal government is best represented, followed by academic institutions, environmental organizations, and state government. The views of private development organizations, foundations, local government agencies, and tribal governments are not well represented in the responses to this consultation.

Figure 2. Geographic distribution of "Regional" responses as reported by respondents



n=170

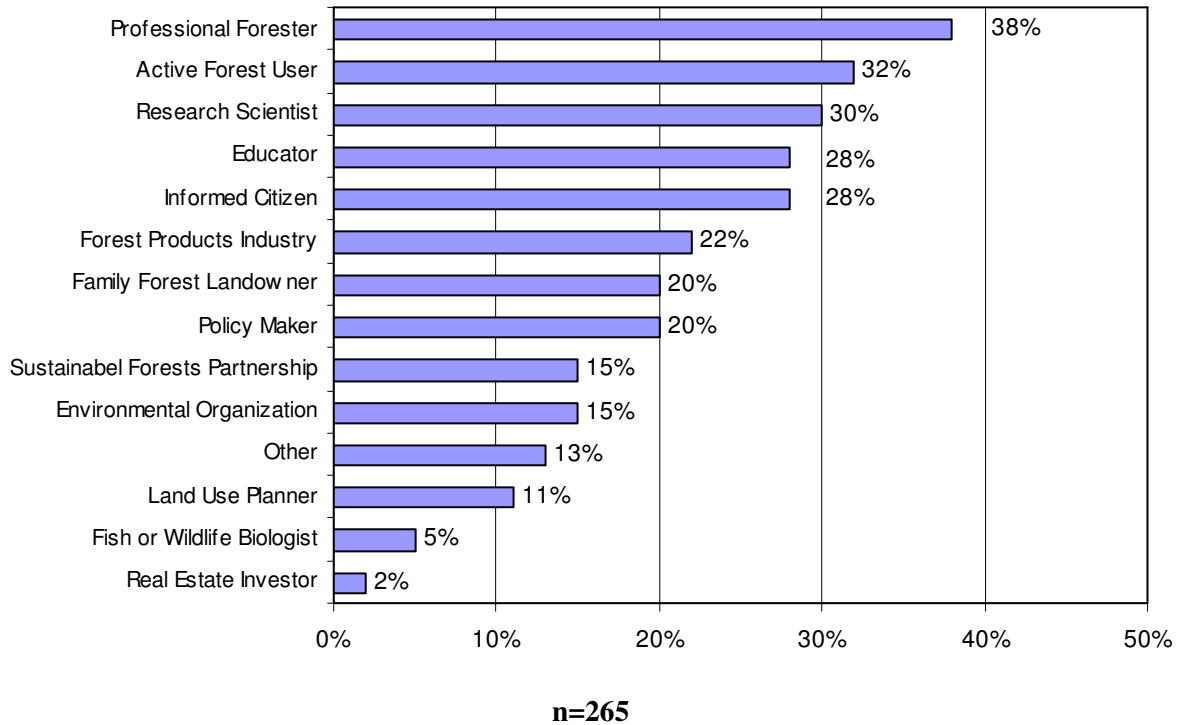
Figure 3. Organizational type as reported by respondents



n=257

Figure 4 summarizes respondents' characterization of their stakeholder perspective. Professional foresters and scientists were well represented in the respondent group, along with forest users, educators, and informed citizens.

Figure 4. Stakeholder perspective as reported by respondents



The consultation team and the Roundtable Core Group recognized the unevenness of representation of some types of organizations and forest stakeholder groups. The team did not evaluate whether this unevenness of response was due to the contact lists from which invitations were sent or whether it represented individual decisions to respond.

Consultation Results

The consultation team gave an overview of the consultation results to the Roundtable Core Group at their February 9, 2007 meeting in Washington, DC. A copy of that presentation is available in Appendix 4.

Familiarity with sustainability indicators and the 2003 National Report

As can be seen in Figure 5, 75% of respondents indicated that they have used sustainability indicators in their work. When asked how they would apply indicator information, there was a largely even spread across the positive response options provided (Figure 6). Figures 7 and 8 describe the level of familiarity that respondents had with the 2003 National Report. Academic stakeholders reported the highest level of familiarity, followed by federal agencies and non-profit organizations. The group that had used the report the most in their work was the federal agencies.

Private and family forest landowners were the least familiar with the 2003 National Report. The results seem to show that the more local the scale of interest, the less the report was used.

Respondents indicated a high level of interest in forest indicator information and a need for such information. It is striking that although more than 75% of respondents reported that they use indicator information for their work and that seventy nine percent of the respondents have heard of or read parts of the 2003 Report, only 15% responded that they used the report to address their need for indicator information. One interpretation of these responses is that 60% of the respondents would have used the 2003 National Report for indicator information if it had been available and useful. This consultation should provide important insight into what factors would make the 2010 National Report provide the indicator information that is needed.

Figure 5. Percent of respondents indicating use of sustainability indicators in their work

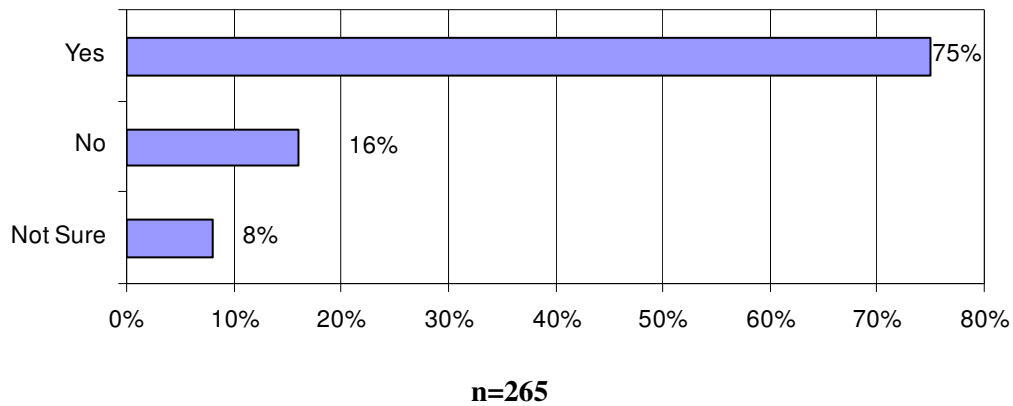


Figure 6. Potential uses of indicator information on forest sustainability in the future

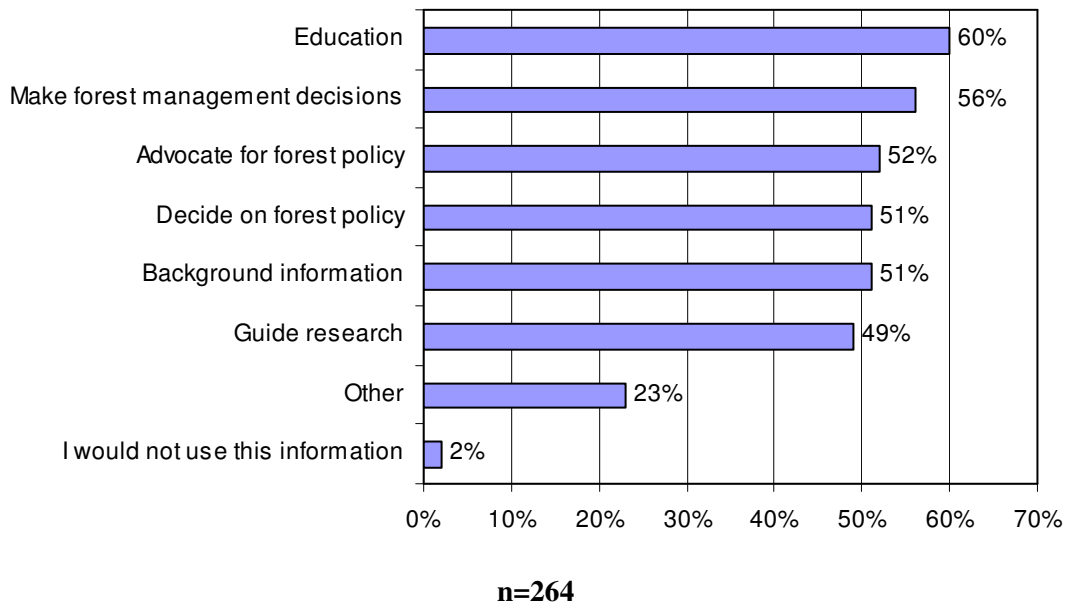


Figure 7. Level of familiarity with the 2003 National Report

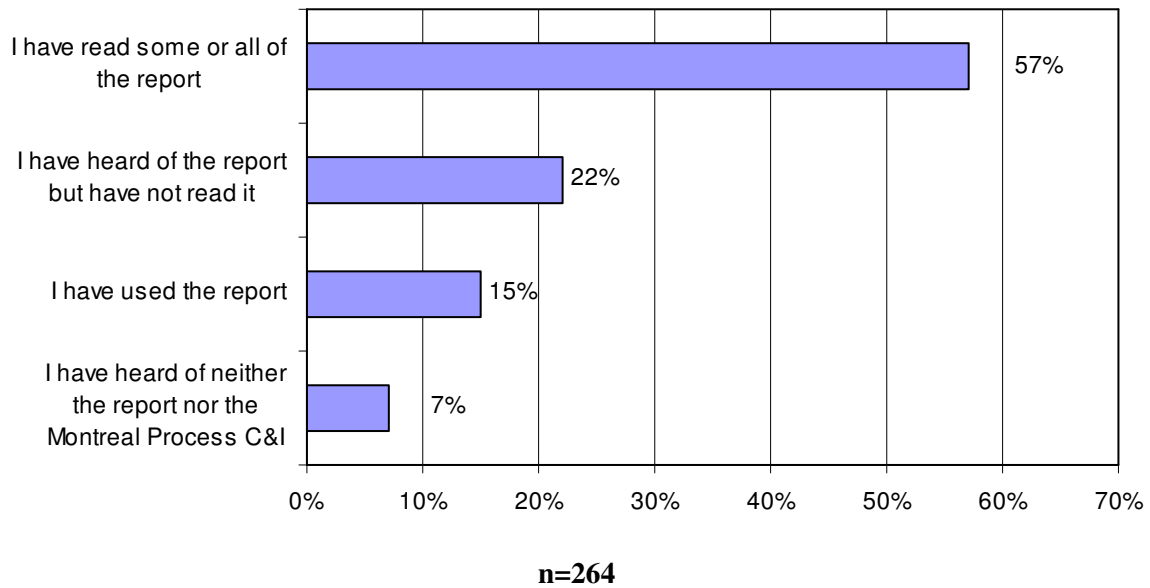
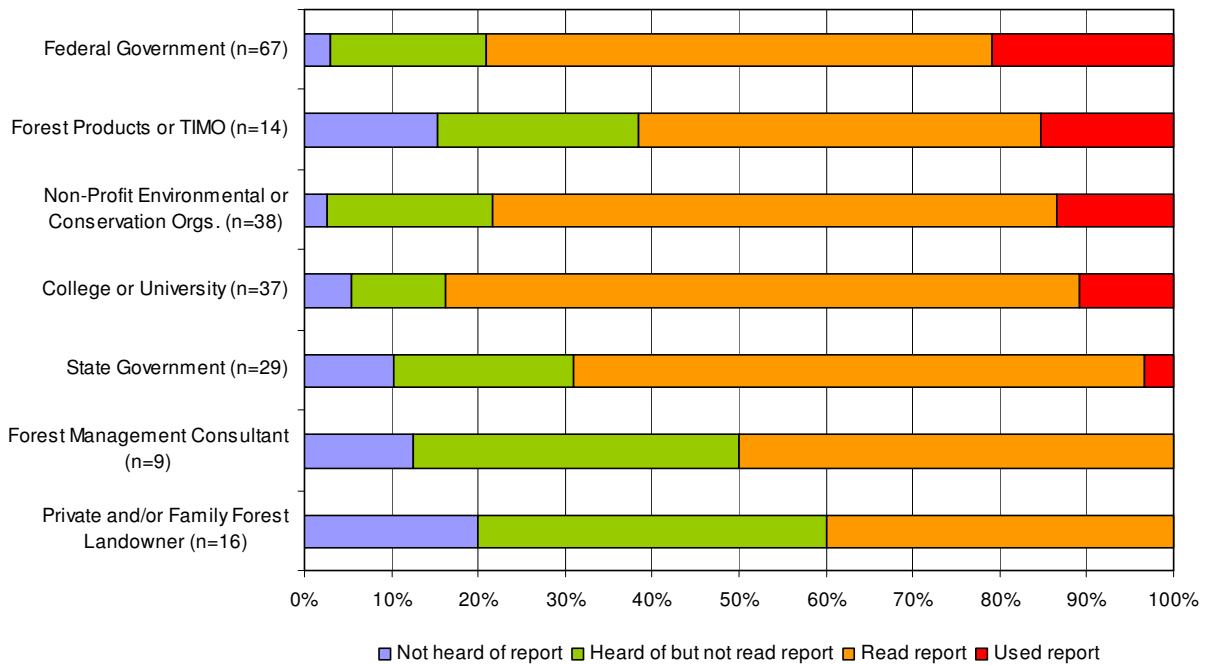


Figure 8. Level of familiarity with the 2003 National Report by stakeholder group



Utility of the 2003 National Report

The consultation instrument included three open-ended questions that required respondents to provide a text response that characterized their thoughts and opinions. The consultation team was impressed at the amount of time respondents took to provide thoughtful answers to these

questions. In analyzing the open-ended comments, the consultation team first coded expressions (sentences and phrases) based on the precise language of the respondents. The comments were grouped into general categories and the number of comments within each category was counted. The results here present both the total number of expressions and the percentage of respondents who made them for each category. The results from such an analysis will depend on the categories chosen and, to some extent, the subjective interpretation of the person analyzing the comments. Nonetheless, many of the comments were quite clear, and the consultation team agreed that the results presented here are a fair and comprehensive representation of the text comments that were received. The responses are summarized below.

What was most useful in the 2003 National Report?

Table 1 summarizes the respondent’s comments regarding what they found most useful in the 2003 National Report. Under the category of “General Explanatory Information,” respondents appreciated the summary information for each indicator along with an explanation of why that indicator is important. They also found data on specific indicators useful for their work. Under “Practical Guidelines for Use,” respondents noted that the report provided a national overview context for forest managers to use in developing and implementing local management goals and plans. Under the category of “Particular Information of Use,” respondents relayed that visual presentations of tables, maps, charts and graphs were most useful. Appendix 5 provides the full table of responses to this question.

Table 1. What was most useful to you in the 2003 National Report?

	Total Responses (n=154)	% respondents (n=113)
General Explanatory Information	75	66%
Overall Context Information	30	27%
Particular Information of Use	26	23%
Practical Guidelines for Use	23	20%

What would have made the 2003 National Report more useful?

Table 2 summarizes the categories of information that respondents felt would have made the 2003 National Report more effective and more useful. “New Information and Analyses” and “Improvements in Indicator Level Reporting” were the top two categories. Under these categories, respondents specified the need to see more information at the regional and local level to provide better context and guidance for their forest-related objectives and challenges. They also requested a clear summary interpretation of the status and trends for key indicators, along with a concept of sustainability benchmarks. In other words, they want to know when the nation is doing a good job on any of these indicators and whether the forest values they represent are

being sustained. In addition, they suggested the need for a summary ‘index’ that would integrate results across multiple indicators and help them understand the overall status and trends for the sustainability of the nation’s forests. Appendix 6 provides the full table of responses to this question.

Table 2. What would have made the 2003 National Report more useful?

	Total Responses (n=309)	% respondents (n=132)
Meaningful Summary and Interpretation	29	22%
Improvements in Indicator Level Reporting	43	33%
New Information and Analyses	51	39%
Organization and Presentation of Results	33	25%
Data Access	13	10%

The importance of forests to people

In July 2006, the Montréal Process Working Group adopted a new indicator, the Importance of Forests to People, to be used in the 2010 National Report. The consultation team included an open-ended question in the consultation instrument to gather information on this new indicator. There were 241 persons who voluntarily provided lengthy text responses regarding the types of value forests provide to individuals and society. This response provides a valuable trove of information for in-depth analysis by other working groups, and the information gathered here will be shared with those groups. A high level characterization of the responses is shown in Table 3 below.

The 241 respondents provided a total of 1,607 responses relative to the question of the importance of forests to people. A listing of detailed responses and the number of times particular responses were made is presented in Appendix 7. The top twenty “values of forests to people” as described in the respondents own words are presented in Appendix 8. The consultation team categorized the responses in two different formats. First, the responses were sorted by MPCFI to discern which of the respondents’ expressed values are already being captured by the Montréal Process framework. Second, the responses were grouped into four major categories: Social, Recreational, and Spiritual Values; Forest Ecosystem Service Values; Forest-Based Products and Economic Values; and Biological and Ecological Values. At the category level, 34% of the responses identified Social, Recreational and Spiritual Values, 29% identified Forest Ecosystem Service Values, 26% identified Forest Based Products and Economic Values, and 11% identified Biological and Ecological Values.

The sustainable supply of wood and wood products that benefit people and the economy was the most often mentioned value (72% of respondents). The second most referred value of forests is recreation (54% of respondents). The service that forests provide for sustaining clean and

abundant water and in protecting and sustaining environmental health and ecosystem processes for the benefit of the earth’s inhabitants were both identified by 48% of respondents. The importance of forests as the source of spiritual renewal, relaxation, well-being, joy and inspiration was addressed by 44% of the respondents. The value of forests for the protection and conservation of diverse wildlife populations and their habitats was noted by 43% of the respondents.

Table 3. The importance of forests to people

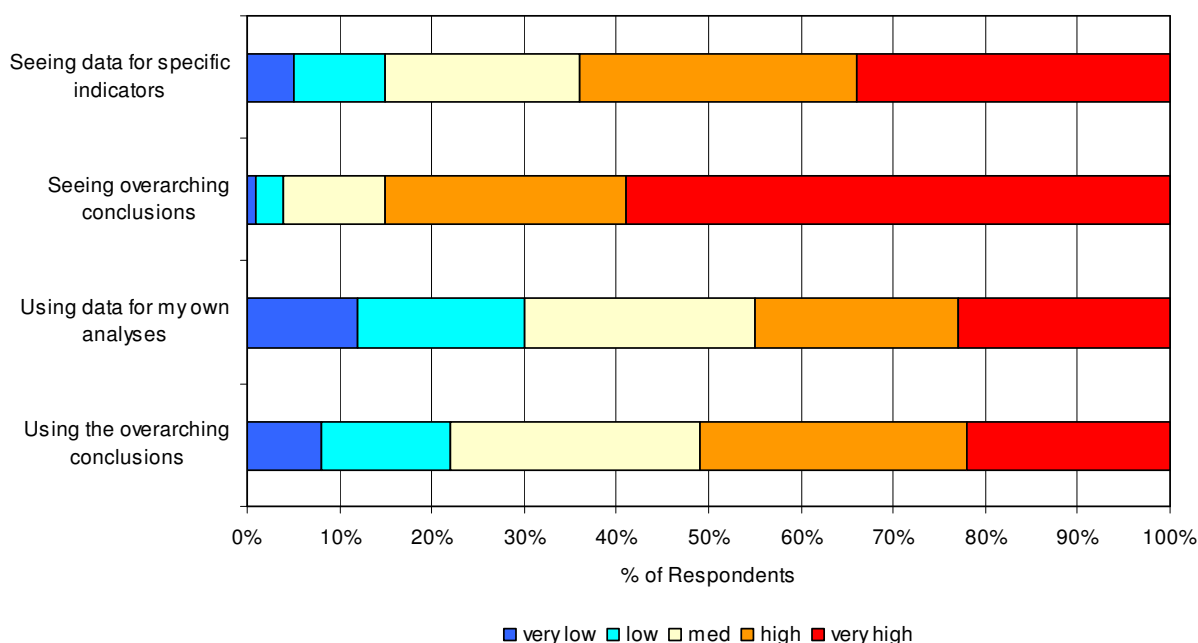
	Total Mentions (n=1419)	% respondents (n=241)
<u>Social, Recreational and Spiritual Values</u>		
Recreation	131	54%
Source of spiritual renewal, relaxation, well-being, joy, and inspiration (77) and sacred space (29)	106	44%
Cultural values, heritage, traditions, and identity	72	30%
Aesthetic value and enjoyment	67	28%
Sustain quality of life and life itself	54	22%
Long-term healthy society connected to the land and sustained by the forest	51	21%
<u>Forest Ecosystem Service Values</u>		
Clean and abundant water	116	48%
Protect and sustain environmental health and ecosystem processes for the benefit of the planet and its inhabitants	115	48%
Clean air (including oxygen and filtration of man-made pollutants)	73	30%
Store carbon and buffer climate extremes	57	24%
Protect watershed health and control soil erosion	50	21%
<u>Forest Based Products and Economic Values</u>		
Sustainable, steady supply of wood and wood products (112) to benefit people, industry, and the economy (62)	174	72%
Personal and community economic health and resilience	70	29%
Long-term economic health of society	62	26%
Socioeconomic benefit of non-wood products use and consumption	61	25%
<u>Biological and Ecological Values</u>		
Protect and conserve diverse wildlife populations and their habitats	104	43%
Conserve biological and genetic diversity	37	15%
Protect and conserve ecological diversity and biological communities	19	8%

Questions Regarding the 2010 National Report

Information Needs, Format, and Content

With regard to the types of information respondents would like to have in the 2010 National Report, Figure 9 shows the strong interest in seeing broad conclusions regarding the sustainability of United States forests. In addition, the respondents are particularly interested to see the underlying data for the specific indicators of greatest interest for them.

Figure 9. The importance of different types of information as indicated by respondents



There are a number of indicators with insufficient amounts of quantitative information to complete statistically significant analyses regarding status and/or trends. Respondents felt that many of these indicators are well understood by experts, and their expert knowledge can be used to make a strong statement regarding the status of these indicators. Figure 10 demonstrates that the potential audience for the 2010 National Report would strongly prefer to see all available quantitative and qualitative (non-quantitative) indicator information that will improve their understanding of the nation's forests and the ability to manage them sustainably.

Figure 11 represents the desirability of different information and report formats. The majority of respondents want to be able to download data at the national and regional level. There is a strong request for high-level summary information and access to published fact sheets that would make it easy to share information.

Figure 10. Value of partial or anecdotal information for respondents' purposes

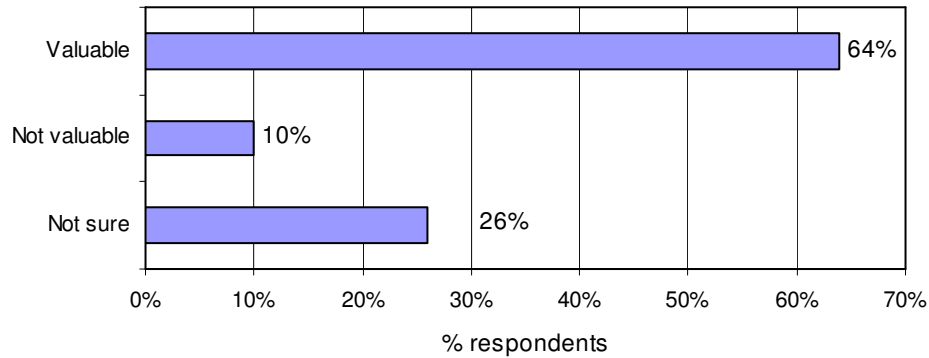
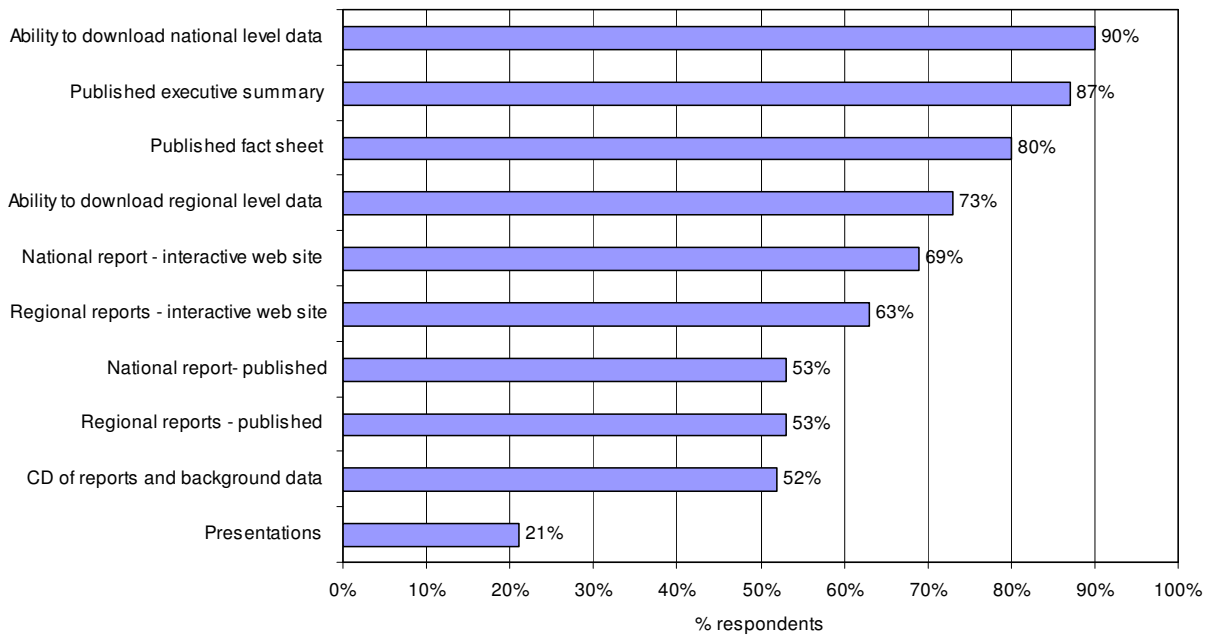
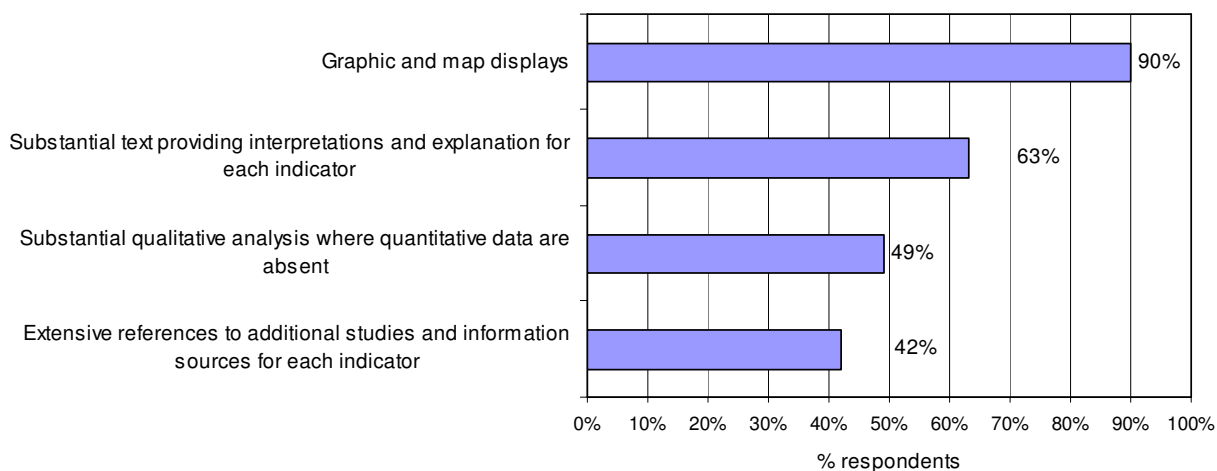


Figure 11. Utility of different information formats



The usefulness of different report content is summarized in Figure 12. Most respondents would like to see the results of indicator analyses presented in graphics and map displays. They are interested to see interpretative text accompanying the graphics, but are not requesting a lengthy text report. As mentioned above, they are interested in being presented with non-quantitative summaries for those indicators that lack quantitative information.

Figure 12. Utility of different content for the 2010 National Report



Prioritization of Criteria and Indicators

The following bar charts represent the respondents' view of the level of importance of each criterion to be included in the 2010 National Report and the level of importance of each criterion for their work.⁵ At the criterion level (Figure 13), the top selections for inclusion in the 2010 National Report were Forest Ecosystem Health and Vitality, Biological Diversity Conservation, and Soil and Water Resource Maintenance. The valuation regarding importance of the different criteria for respondent's work followed a similar pattern. Of particular note was the interest for criterion information on the Productive Capacity of Forest Ecosystems. Though some criteria scored higher than others, all categories were recognized as providing important information for the assessment of and reporting on sustainable forests.

Criterion 1. Biodiversity

Within the Biodiversity criterion (Figure 14), the indicators of greatest value to respondents were Forest Extent, Forest Fragmentation, Forest Protection Status, and Species at Risk.

⁵ Respondents were asked to evaluate importance on a five point scale from low to high (e.g. low, somewhat low, neutral, somewhat high, high). The consultation team added together all of the "high" and "somewhat high" responses to evaluate priority over all responses. The same method was used for indicators within each of the seven criteria.

Figure 13. Criteria Prioritization for 2010 Report

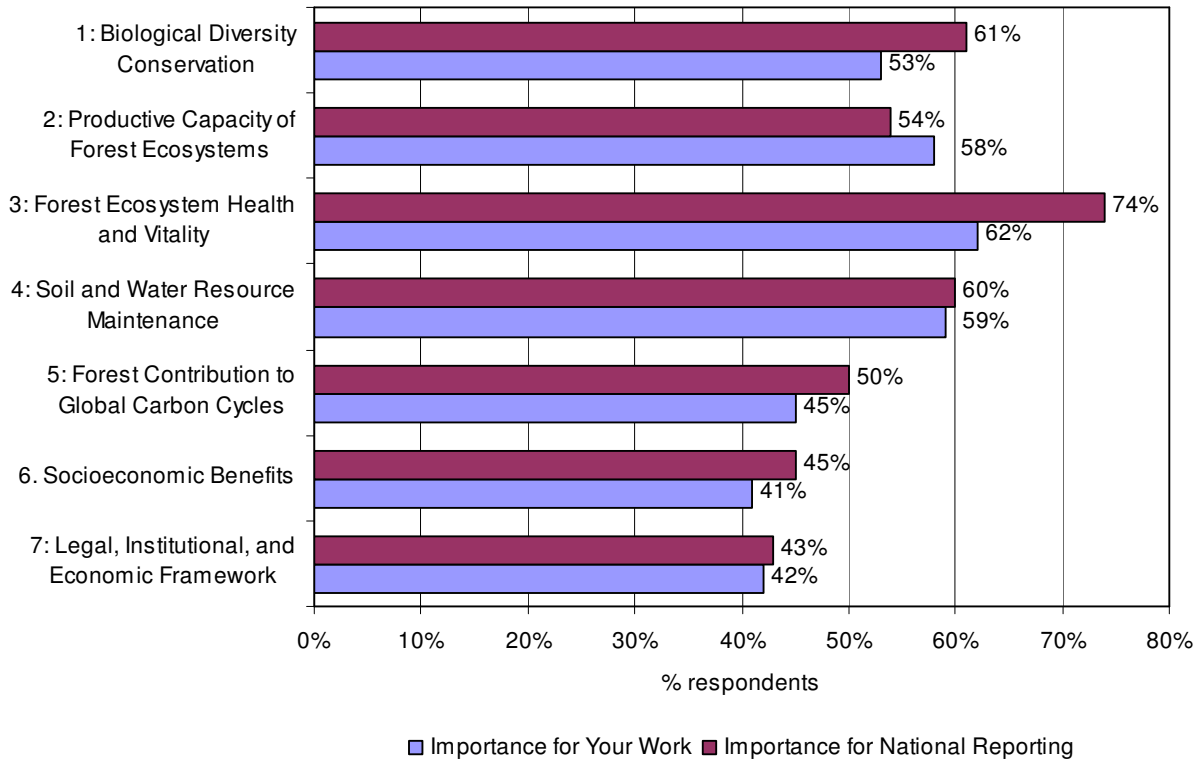
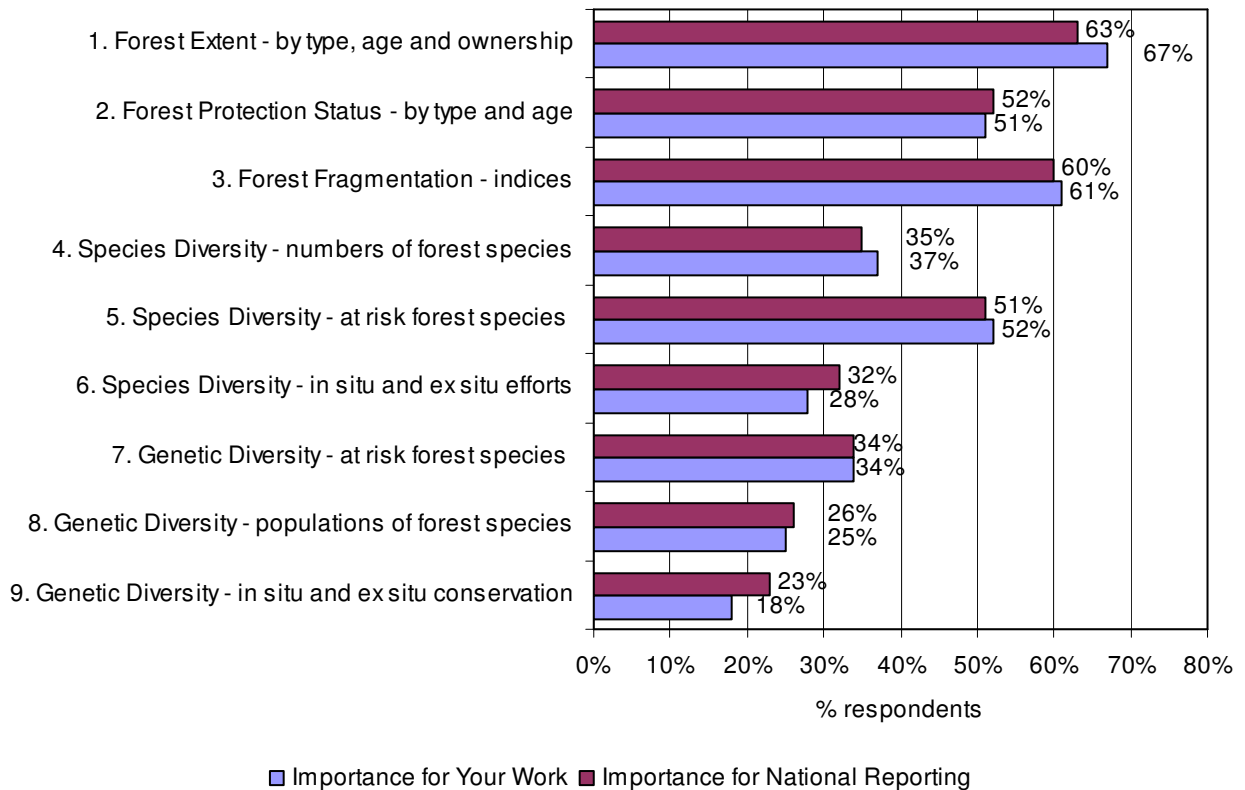


Figure 14. Indicator Prioritization: Biodiversity



Criterion 2. Productive Capacity

Within the Productive Capacity criterion (Figure 15), the indicators of greatest value were Annual Harvest, Area of Land Available for Production, and Total Available Growing Stock for Wood Production.

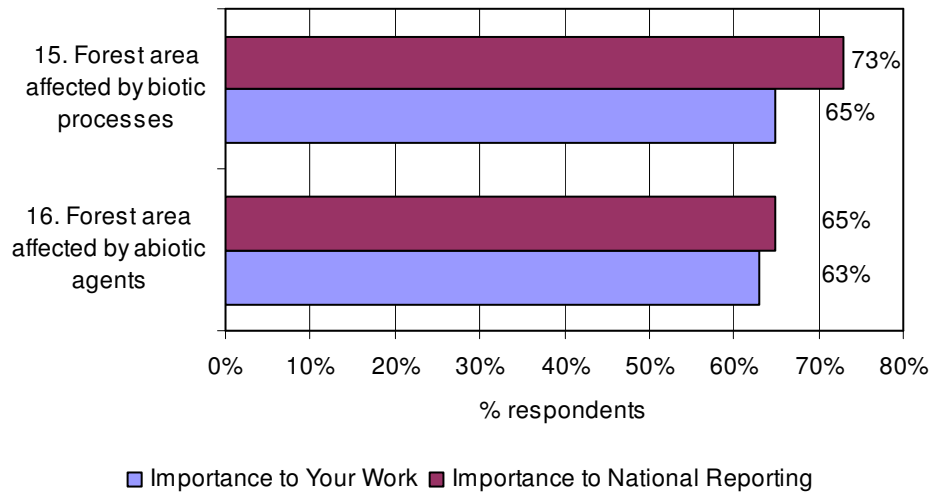
Figure 15. Indicator Prioritization: Productive Capacity



Criterion 3. Forest Ecosystem Health

There are only two indicators in the Forest Ecosystem Health criterion, and respondents rated both as important for national level reporting and for their work (Figure 16).

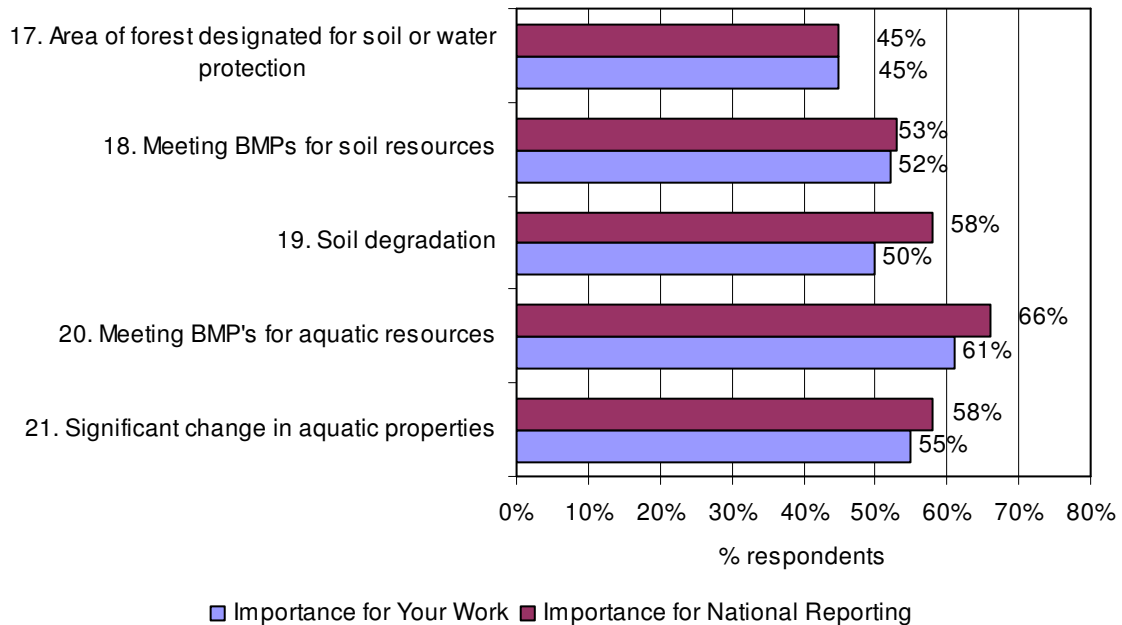
Figure 16. Indicator Prioritization: Forest Ecosystem Health



Criterion 4. Soil and Water Resources

Within the Soil and Water Resources criterion (Figure 17), there was strong interest in information regarding the quality of both aquatic and soil resources and the degree to which best management practices are being implemented.

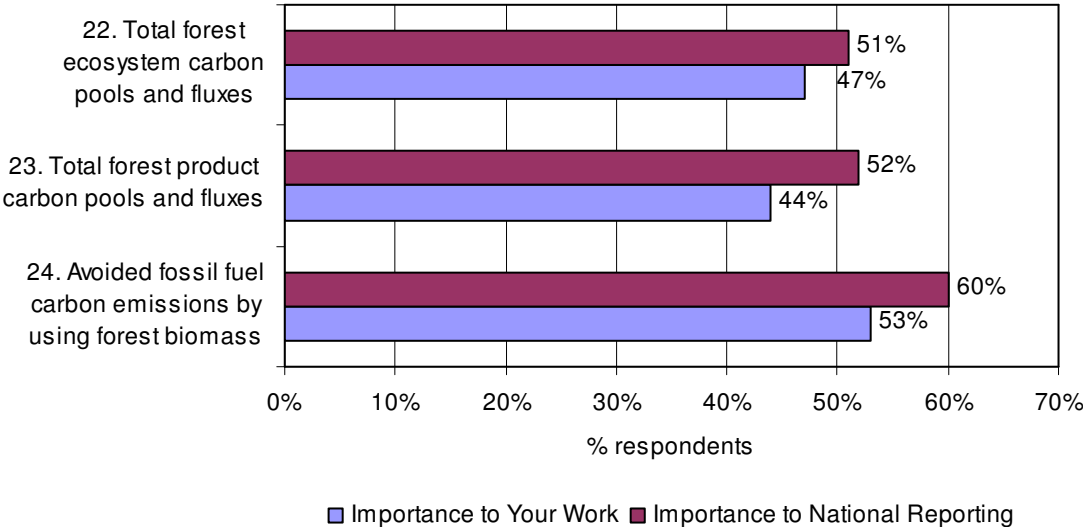
Figure 17. Indicator Prioritization: Soil and Water Resources



Criterion 5. Contribution to the Carbon Cycle

For the Contribution to the Carbon Cycle criterion (Figure 18), there was interest to have access to information that demonstrates the relationship of forests to climate change and carbon sequestration, and avoided carbon emissions by using forest biomass.

Figure 18. Indicator Prioritization: Contribution to the Carbon Cycle



Criterion 6. Socioeconomic Benefits

Within the Socioeconomic Benefits criterion (Figure 19), the most noted indicator was The Importance of Forests to People. The other socio-economic indicators that received high interest were the Value of Wood and Wood Products, Revenue from Forest-Based Environmental Services, Forest Employment Numbers, and Capital Investment in the Forest Industry.

Criterion 7. Legal, Institutional and Economic Framework

Within the criterion of Legal, Institutional, and Economic Framework (Figure 20), indicator regarding the application of best practices codes was the most important to the respondents. These were followed by indicators showing the Robustness of Forest Assessments, Prediction of Climate Change, Scientific Understanding of Forest Ecosystems, Appropriate Economic Regulatory Environment, and the Availability of Indicator Information.

Figure 19. Indicator Prioritization: Socio-economic Benefits

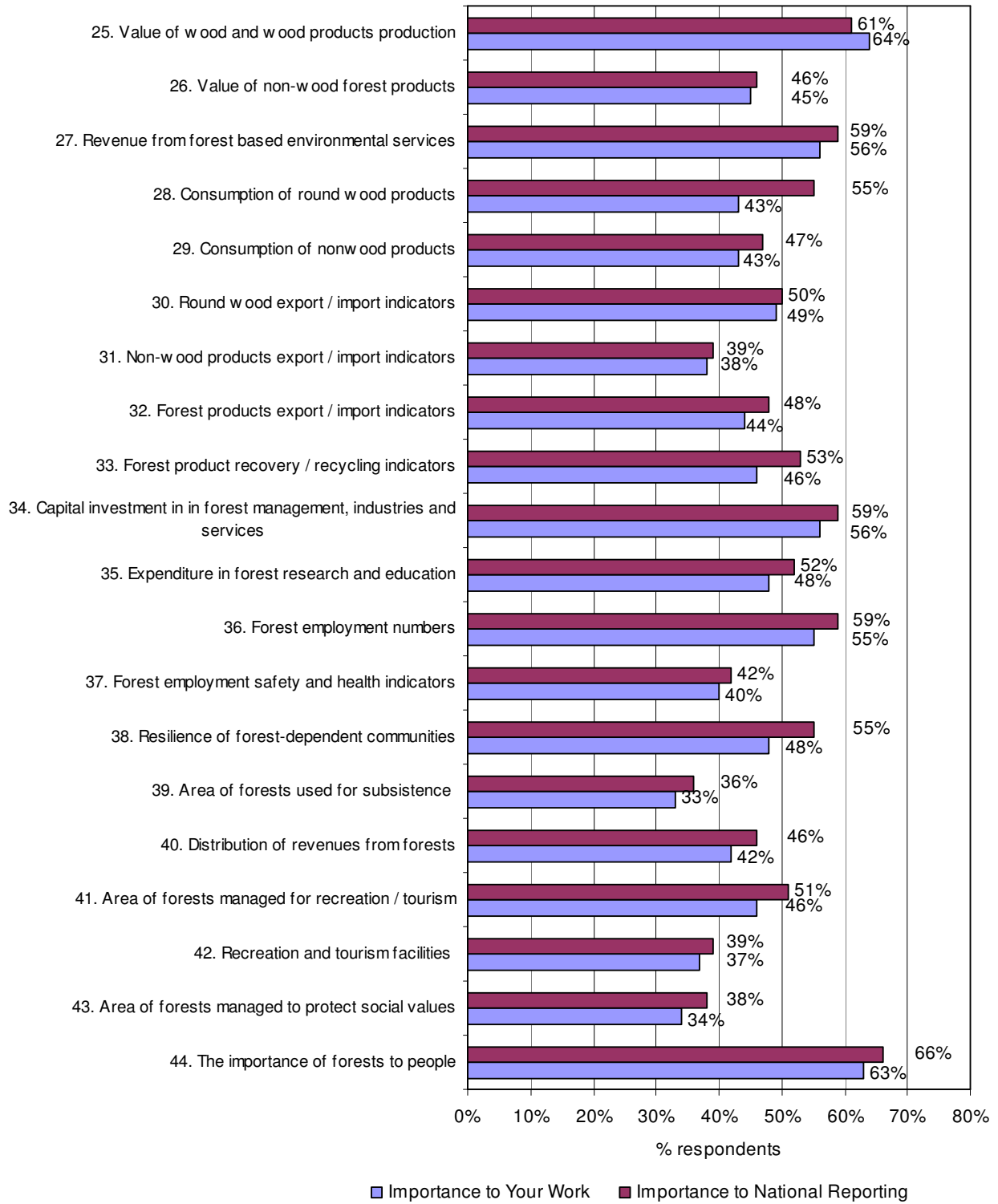
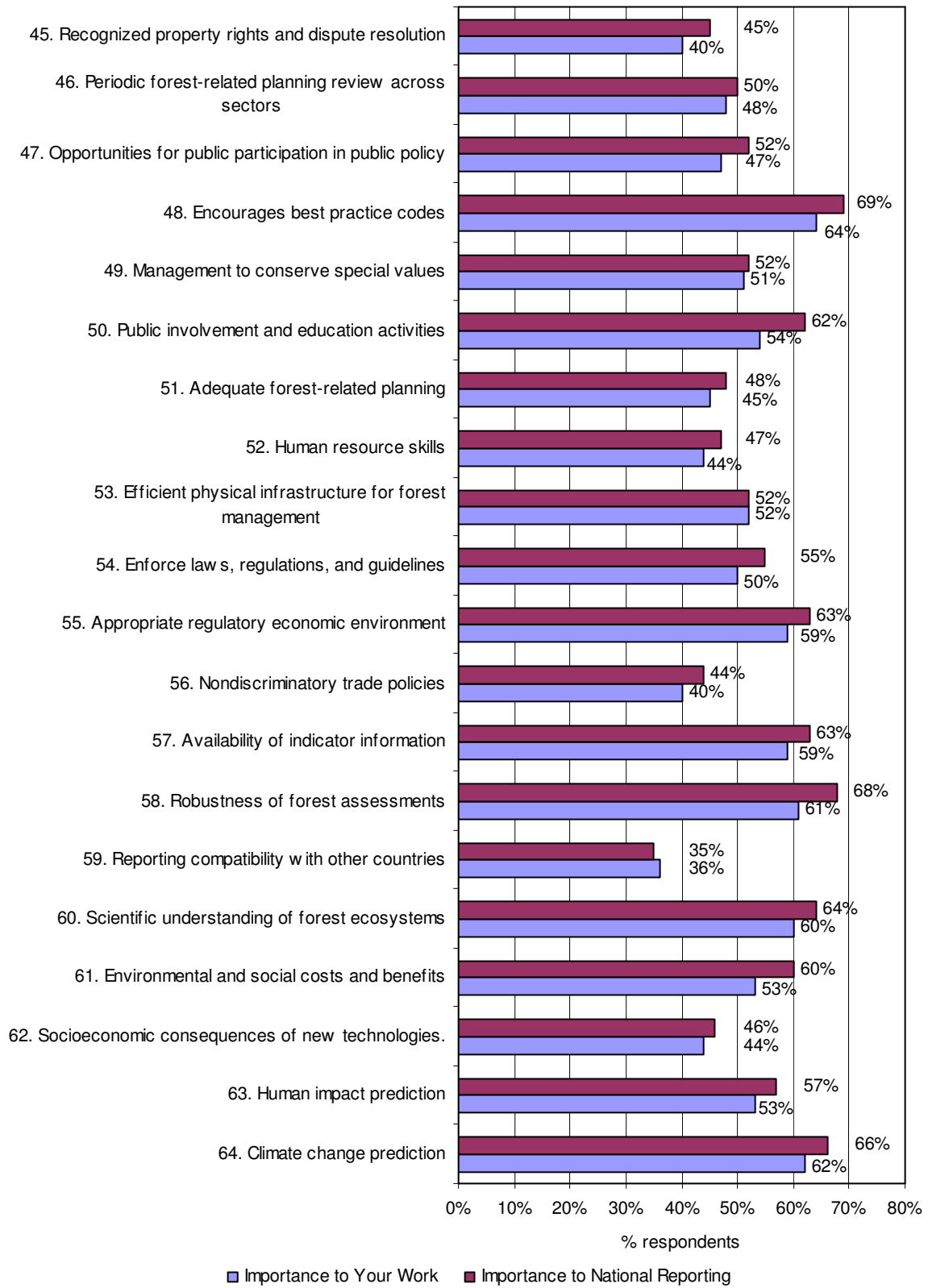


Figure 20. Prioritization of Indicators: Legal, Institutional, and Economic Framework



Summary of indicator priorities across all criteria

The top 10 indicators across all of the criteria are listed in Tables 4 and 5. Table 4 presents the stakeholders' view of the 10 most important indicators to be included in the 2010 National Report. Table 5 presents the respondents' views on the top 10 indicators that provide the most value for their work. There was considerable overlap between the two categories.

The highest priority is associated with information on the impact of invasive species to forest ecosystems (biotic impacts). Next in importance is whether the nation is using best management practices for forest stewardship activities (including management of aquatic resources). There was broad interest for information detailing annual harvest (wood products) statistics and the availability of land for production. Stakeholders are interested to know the status of forest assessments. Two other indicators in the top 10 for both lists were forest information related to climate change and the extent of forest affected by abiotic agents.

A unique indicator that was only identified in the top 10 for national reporting was the extent of scientific understanding of forest ecosystems. Unique indicators that were identified as valuable for respondents' work were information on forest extent by type, age class, and ownership, as well as the production value of wood and wood products.

Table 4. Top 10 indicators for national reporting

Indicator	% respondents
15. Forest area affected by biotic processes	73%
48. Encourages best practice codes	69%
58. Robustness of forest assessments	68%
44. The importance of forests to people	66%
64. Climate change prediction	66%
20. Meeting BMP's for aquatic resources	66%
13. Annual harvest—wood products	65%
10. Area of land available for wood production	65%
16. Forest area affected by abiotic agents	65%
60. Scientific understanding of forest ecosystems	64%

Table 5. Top 10 indicators for respondents' work

Indicator	% respondents
1. Forest extent by type, age and ownership	67%
13. Annual harvest—wood products	66%
15. Forest area affected by biotic processes	65%
48. Encourages best practice codes	64%
10. Area of land available for wood production	64%
25. Value of wood and wood products production	64%
44. The importance of forests to people	63%
16. Forest area affected by abiotic agents	63%
64. Climate change prediction	62%
58. Robustness of forest assessments	61%

Stakeholder representation and potential for bias

Central concerns of the consultation team and the Roundtable Core Group were ensuring a sufficiently large consultation sample and that the consequent pool of respondents would provide a fair representation of the potential users of the 2010 National Report. In conducting the consultation, the consultation team sent emails to 2,311 names taken from the forest stakeholder database at Meridian Institute and contact lists from other organizations concerned with forest sustainability in the United States (Table 6). The forest stakeholder database portion of the sample dominated the consultation, comprising 93% of the sample and 85% of the respondents. It is difficult to identify the potential users of the 2010 National Report and to obtain a statistically representative sample of those users. The consultation team thinks that organizations and individuals who have been involved with forest issues in the past and who were willing to participate in this consultation are reasonably representative of those who would take the time to read and use the 2010 National Report. There may be a desire to expand the audience to those who have not been involved with forest issues in the past, but these audiences may have different information needs.

The response rate was 11%. The 280 responses received by the consultation team provide a rich source of information about the kinds of information and reporting formats people are seeking from the 2010 National Report. The consultation team was unable to measure potential non-response bias for the consultation.

Table 6. Sample size and respondents by organization

Indicator	# Invitations	# Respondents	Response Rate
Meridian Institute (Roundtable)	2,311	239	10 %
National Woodland Owners Assn.	94	17	18 %
American Forest & Paper Assn.	60	11	18 %
Society of American Foresters	7	2	29 %
Consultation team	5	5	100 %
Review Group (from Roundtable)	9	6	67 %
TOTAL	2,486	280	11%

Table 7 displays responses when participants were asked to describe their professional organizations in terms of major organization categories. At 27% of the total number of respondents, the federal government has by far the largest representation, followed by academia, environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and state government. Government, academia, and NGOs account for approximately 80% of the sample. Private forest products firms and landowners, forestry consultants, and local governments comprise most of the remainder.

Table 7. Organizational categories

	# Respondents	% of Total
Federal Government	69	27%
College or University	38	15%
Nonprofit Environmental or Conservation Org.	37	14%
State Government	30	12%
Other	30	12%
Private and/or Family Forest Landowner	16	6%
Forest Products Firm or TIMO	14	5%
Forest Management Consultant	9	4%
Not representing an Organization	8	3%
County or Local Government	2	1%
Tribal Government	2	1%
Foundation	2	1%
TOTAL	257	100%

In addition to describing their organizations, respondents were asked to identify the stakeholder group or groups with which they most closely identified. Responses to this query are shown in Table 8. Each respondent chose an average of three stakeholder groups, indicating a diverse set of interests and roles on the part of each individual. Thirty-eight percent of all respondents identified themselves as “professional foresters” and nearly a third as “active forest users.” On the other end of the scale, fish and wildlife biologists and real estate investors were comparatively underrepresented at 5% and 2%, respectively.

Table 8. Stakeholder group

	# Respondents	% of Total
Professional Forester	101	38%
Active Forest User	85	32%
Research Scientist	79	30%
Educator	73	28%
Informed and Interested Citizen	73	28%
Forest Products Industry	57	22%
Family Forest Landowner	52	20%
Policy Maker	52	20%
Sustainable Forest Partnership	41	15%
Environmental Organization	41	15%
Other	34	13%
Land Use Planner	29	11%
Fish or Wildlife Biologist	14	5%
Real Estate Investor	4	2%

The consultation team could not determine whether the low number of responses for certain stakeholder groups was the result of non-response, or simply that these groups are not well represented in the mailing lists that were available. There was a low representation of biologists, real estate investors, and local government amongst the respondents. Given the increasing importance of real estate investment in determining the fate of private forest lands and the growing recognition of the importance to sustain biodiversity and ecosystem health a more robust response from people representing these interests would have been helpful.

Major Findings

There was a limited response to this consultation, but those that responded provided a considerable amount of information. They demonstrated a high degree of concern for the topic of sustainable forests and interest in the 2010 National Report. Government agencies, NGOs, and academia were well represented among respondents. Additional representation from real estate and biologist stakeholder groups would have been useful.

Familiarity with Sustainability Indicators

Respondents demonstrated a high level of familiarity with the use of sustainability indicators, but not so much with the MPCCI or the 2003 National Report. More than 75% of respondents reported that they use indicator information for their work, with only 2% reporting they have no use for this information. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents have heard of or read parts of the 2003 National Report. It is striking that only 15% responded that they used this report to address their need for indicator information. One interpretation of this information is that 60% of the respondents would have used the 2003 National Report for indicator information if it had been useful and available. Those that were familiar with the 2003 National Report provided useful comments on aspects that would improve its utility.

General Content for the 2010 National Report

The goal for the 2010 National Report is to provide information on the status and trends of forest lands with the overall objective that will lead to improved stewardship. To achieve this goal, respondents have requested a combination of accessible information on specific indicators along with a clear, high-level summary interpretation of what all of this information means. The 2010 National Report will be the second report on the sustainability of United States forests, and respondents expect an interpretation of the trends for these indicators over time. They would like to see clear benchmarks for each indicator to help them interpret how the nation's forests are faring relative to each of these indicators. They want to be told if and how things are changing and the implications of these changes.

Even though individuals and stakeholder groups had their favorite criteria and indicators, there were no clear winners and losers relative to which criteria and indicators were more important than others. There was general agreement on the need for some level of reporting on every indicator, even if there is limited data availability for some of them. The overall understanding of forest sustainability requires a view across all indicators. However, it was suggested that the Forest Service and others prioritize the use of available resources to collect and report on those indicators that provide the most important information.

Respondents realize that current information available best supports national-level reporting and provides a valuable broad, contextual overview for the sustainable management of U.S. forests. However, in order for the 2010 National Report to provide greater utility to report users, it will eventually need to provide information at regional and local scales.

In addition, a number of respondents identified the need for a summary index that could integrate results across all criteria and indicators and provide one sustainability measure for the status and trends of the nation's forest ecosystems.

Detailed Content for the 2010 National Report

Respondents were interested in the general health of forest ecosystems. Comments included in the Importance of Forests to People category indicate that, for the respondents who participated in this consultation, "health" includes the sustainability of forest products, ecosystem services, and existence/aesthetic values.

Respondents want to see more data for high priority indicators. Criteria ranking indicates an overall preference for biophysical measures both in terms of usefulness of indicators in respondents' work and in judgment of overall relevance to national reporting on forest sustainability. Recreation and water top the list and deserve focused attention. Adherence to best management codes and other criterion 7 indicators figure prominently in top 10 indicators for national reporting. The needs for reporting on forestry and wood products indicators are strong indicator for those who want to use the 2010 National Report for their work.

Format for the 2010 National Report

Respondents want a balance of brief text that explains each indicator and interprets the data for each indicator. The respondents want simple visual information (i.e., tables, graphs, and maps) based on scientific evidence. They would like to have all of the data available through on-line data delivery mechanisms so users can undertake their own analyses and interpretation.

The use of qualitative data regarding indicators was also deemed to be extremely valuable. There is an endorsement that such data and other non-quantitative information be used wherever quantitative data are not available. Respondents indicated that such information is useful and that it is sufficient to provide summary types of information that many people want for many indicators. Providing non-quantitative information may require additional explanation regarding where the source of such information and its limitations, if any.

In addition, the respondents would like to have summary documents that describe the interpretations at the level of individual and composite indicators. These summary reports should be published as hard copies and should similarly be available to download in fact sheets.