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**Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations****Economic Commission for Europe****Food and Agriculture Organization****Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry****European Forestry Commission****Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics,
Economics and Management****Forty-fifth session**

Geneva, 22–24 May 2024

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Update: Review of the Integrated Programme of Work**Zero draft of the 2026-2029 Integrated Programme of Work****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

The following document was prepared by the secretariat in response to the request by the eighty-first session of the Economic Commission for Europe Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and the forty-first session of the Food and Agriculture Organization European Forestry Commission (EFC) to initiate the mid-term review of the Integrated Programme of Work (IPoW).

The document includes input received during the informal online feedback session on 15 April 2024, written submissions received, as well as the secretariat's experience with implementing the current IPoW (open items are placed in square brackets). The Joint Bureau of COFFI and EFC had no factual objections to the current draft.

This document will serve as the basis for consultations with member States and stakeholders (English only in hybrid format) on 22 May 2024. The secretariat will present updates.



I. Integrated Programme of Work

1. The Integrated Programme of Work (IPoW) 2026-2029 is a non-binding compilation of activities to be carried out in coordination by ECE and FAO through the Joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section (“The Joint Section”) in the thematic areas defined below and under their respective mandates and work programmes. In the case of ECE, its annual programme plan, budget and the Programme of Work for ECE Subprogram 7, Forests and the Forest Industry (adopted by its Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry, COFFI, every year) outlines the mandates and determines the availability of regular budget funds exclusively. In the case of FAO, this includes staff and resources from the regional budget. The IPoW is not endowed with any specifically allocated budget and serves as a means of coordinating the regional activities under ECE’s Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and FAO’s European Forestry Commission (EFC). The present IPoW does not contain all the activities carried out by ECE and FAO. Therefore, certain organization-specific mandated activities will be implemented by each organization separately.
2. The IPoW contributes to the implementation of regional and global processes within the existing mandates of ECE and FAO including: the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 and declared Global Forest Goals, the Global Biodiversity Framework (CBD), and the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
3. The IPoW is implemented jointly by the two organizations through the Joint Section, based on a partnership agreement signed in 2012 between ECE and FAO which outlines the working modalities of the cooperation. The IPoW 2026-2029 assigns the responsibilities of each organization to specific deliverables under the below thematic priorities. The oversight responsibility for the implementation of the IPoW remains with the members of COFFI and EFC.
4. The IPoW is implemented in cooperation with member States, regional economic integration organizations in close cooperation with relevant organizations and processes at all levels and other relevant stakeholders participating in the COFFI and EFC intergovernmental processes.

A. Objective of the Integrated Programme of Work

5. The IPoW aims to assist member States and regional economic integration organizations to strengthen the sustainable management of trees and forests and enhance the contribution of forests and forest services and products to sustainable development, climate action and biodiversity in the ECE region. It is implemented by the Joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section in cooperation with other relevant partners and resources made available by both ECE and FAO, linking core related functions, namely: analytical and normative work; data collection, monitoring and assessment; international policy dialogue and advice; capacity-building; technical assistance; and communication.

B. Scope

1. Geographical scope

6. The ECE region, i.e. all fifty-six member States of ECE – in line with the membership of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and the members States of the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC). The region covers about 1.7 billion hectares of boreal, temperate forests and semi-tropical forests which comprise the “Northern Forests”.

2. Substantive scope

7. Promote cooperation for sustainable forest management, forest landscape restoration, sustainable use of forest products and services, linkages between sustainable food systems and forests, and urban and peri-urban forestry;

8. Collect, validate and disseminate information and data, research, studies and analysis related to the state of forests, sustainable forest management, the sustainable production and consumption of wood products, and urban and peri-urban forestry in coordination with other international organizations whenever relevant and within the technical, administrative and budgetary frameworks of the hosting organizations;

9. Facilitate exchange of national and sub-national experiences and best practices and monitor progress on achieving sustainable forest management, help member States measure progress towards achieving the relevant Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests,

10. Build capacity and prepare dedicated guidance material and publications on forests and the forest sector including on the triple planetary crisis upon availability of resources and in coordination with FAO and other relevant organizations.

11. Communicate, raise awareness and organize events on forests and the forest sector in the ECE region, and sharing information about the thematic priorities. also relevant for the triple planetary crisis and global processes.

C. Thematic priorities

12. The thematic priorities of the IPoW (in no order of importance) which will be reviewed after 2 years follow. A table listing the organization responsible for the delivery of the activities under the thematic priorities is contained in Annex 3:

1. List of thematic priorities

13. **Intergovernmental meetings** (formal and policy dialogues in online and hybrid mode where possible and financial resources available). [Switzerland: proposes to consider organizing a policy dialogue targeting the next ministerial conference in 2028 as a cooperation between all the forest processes of the region. The European Forest Alliance (EFA) should continue actively supporting synergies.]

- (a) Joint Session of COFFI and EFC
- (b) Joint Working Party [tbd.]
- (c) International Day of Forests
- (d) Policy dialogues
- (e) Meetings of the Teams of Specialists

14. **Northern temperate, boreal and semi-tropical forests** [Spain: Northern forests” appears to exclude forests from the southern regions.]

- (a) Climate Change adaptation and mitigation
- (b) Biodiversity [supported by Spain, Switzerland, Poland]
- (c) Disturbances and damage
- (d) Forests, forest management
- (e) Boreal forests [Spain: proposes to delete “boreal forests” as a subtheme and review how this is categorized and presented.]

15. **Data and Information**

- (a) Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire
- (b) Timber Forecast Questionnaire
- (c) INForest
- (d) Forest Ownership Reporting
- (e) Global Forest Resources Assessment

- (f) Joint Wood Energy Enquiry
- (g) Pan-European data collection

16. **Urban and peri-urban trees and forests** [Spain: does not consider urban trees and forests a thematic priority, as it is not a core item for the IPoW. Proposes creating a thematic priority for "Trees Outside of the Forest"] [Expert for Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs) and Climate Change (CC) proposes adding "Tree out of Forest (ToF)" under "Urban trees and Forests"]

17. **Forest products and services**

(a) Climate change mitigation and adaptation – including deforestation free supply chains, low carbon construction, market adaptation to future tree species, carbon markets, etc. [Online session Türkiye: supports inclusion of assessment of forest products markets adaptation to climate change]

- (b) Wood energy
- (c) Bioeconomy and circular economy
- (d) Market Assessments of production, trade and consumption of wood products
 - (i) Forest Products Annual Market Review
 - (ii) Data Briefs
 - (iii) Country market statements
 - (iv) Market statement
 - (v) Other ad hoc assessments

18. **Foresight:** [Switzerland: proposes to consider postponing the next outlook study longer than 2030] [Sweden: inquires whether ToS on Forest Sector Outlook will be relaunched under the 2026-2029 IPoW]

- (a) Outlook study preparation start (second half of IPoW period)
- (b) Annual timber forecast questionnaire.

D. Implementation Modalities

19. The Committee and the Commission discuss and adopt the IPoW in a joint session. The IPoW is subsequently submitted to the Executive Committee of the ECE.

20. **Reporting and prioritization:** The IPoW implementation progress through the tasks assigned to the two organizations (see Annex 3) will be reported annually by the Joint Section. If necessary, a more strategic review and prioritization can be undertaken every two years at the request of member States or the Joint Section.

21. **Funding and resources:** Both organizations ensure that adequate and equitable resources are made available to implement the Integrated Programme of Work. For ECE, this includes a certain number of human and operational resources assigned through the ECE's annual programme plan and budget and the Programme of Work for ECE Subprogram 7, Forests and the Forest Industry. For FAO, this includes staff and resources from the regional budget. Annex 3 includes an indicative table of thematic priorities funded through the regular budget from ECE or FAO as well as required extrabudgetary resources. Annual updates will be provided at COFFI or Joint Sessions.

22. **Extrabudgetary resources and voluntary contributions** are necessary to cover the full implementation of the IPoW. Member States, regional economic integration organizations and other donors will support the implementation of the IPoW through financial and/or in-kind contributions. Funding gaps will be presented to the joint bureau and delegates of the COFFI and EFC. Both organizations commit to undertake fundraising to raise equal shares (see indicative table in the Annex 3).

23. **Joint sessions** will be held every 2 years under the auspices of the ECE or FAO (alternating each time). Due regard shall be given to the Committee and Commission's official languages when organizing meetings and issuing publications and documents. The official languages of ECE are English, French and Russian. The official languages of EFC are English, French and Spanish.

24. Official documents at Joint sessions of the Committee and Commission are submitted for processing and translation with costs covered by ECE and FAO for their respective meetings. Interpretation (into English, French and Russian) during Joint sessions held every four years under the auspices of ECE will be covered from ECE regular budget resources. Translation of official documents into English, French and Russian will be covered by ECE regular budget resources. FAO will cover Spanish translation and interpretation.

25. Joint Meetings held under the auspices of FAO will be covered by FAO resources. This includes interpretation and translation costs into English and French. FAO will cover Spanish translation and interpretation, ECE will cover Russian translation and interpretation.

26. Online and hybrid meeting formats should be used as appropriate wherever authorized, convenient and feasible to allow for broader participation.

27. Member States are encouraged to consider hosting Joint sessions.

28. **Publications:** Publications should be published in digital format only whenever possible. Joint publications are strictly limited to jointly funded activities and implemented jointly by the two organizations.

29. **Broader Engagement:** A broader engagement by member States and regional economic integration organizations will require resources to finance the participation of delegates from eligible countries with economies in transition.

30. **Teams of Specialists:** Teams of Specialists (ToS) provide advice and undertake activities that support the implementation of the IPoW. Their terms of reference are approved by COFFI and the Teams are subsequently established by the ECE Executive Committee every 2 years. Secretariat services are provided by ECE (and FAO in case ToS are serviced by FAO) through their separate budgetary processes. The work and expected outputs of the Teams of Specialists is aligned with the ECE programmatic budget, the IPoW and its objectives. The ToS support the Joint Section in the IPoW's implementation, recognizing the importance of the involvement of the scientific community and forest practitioners. The ToS report annually to the Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management (tbd.). The Annex 1 and Annex 2 of the IPoW contains (for information purposes) the terms of reference (TORs) and Guidelines of the Teams of Specialists (see website: <https://unece.org/forests/teams-specialists>).

31. Teams of Specialists: [to be] approved by COFFI and the ECE Executive Committee in 2025:

(a) Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management (ECE serviced)

(b) Team of Specialists on Sustainable Forest Products (ECE serviced)

(c) Team of Specialists on Boreal Forests (ECE serviced)

(d) Team of Specialists on Forest Products and Wood Energy Statistics (ECE serviced)

~~(e) Teams of Specialist on Forest Communication (FAO serviced) [proposal to move the Forest Communicators Network to FAO and discontinue as an ECE Team of Specialists]~~

(f) Team of Specialists on Forest Sector Outlook [to be relaunched in 2027 to prepare a forest sector outlook study 2030 upon availability of resources]

E. Principles guiding implementation of the Integrated Programme of Work

1. Implementation should be guided by the following principles:

32. **Partnership:** There will be a strong focus on working in partnership with international, regional and sub-regional actors in all thematic priorities of the IPoW as the most effective way of optimizing benefits, resources and avoiding potential duplication of activities. The Committee and the Commission will seek and welcome cooperation on any of the relevant thematic priorities.

33. **Coordination:** ECE and FAO will identify activities and opportunities funded from other ECE and FAO resources that are aligned with and support the implementation of the IPoW and support its implementation.

34. **Outreach to other constituencies:** In the implementation of the IPoW, the Committee and the Commission will include constituencies beyond the traditional forest community to ensure the relevance of the forest sector and its contribution to other sectors. They will coordinate relevant actions with, for example, the environment, biodiversity, climate, energy, water, agriculture, construction and textile sectors, using the potentials offered by ECE and FAO.

35. **Involvement of the private sector and civil society:** The private sector and civil society are key actors for sustainable forest management, sustainable forest products and services and the transition towards a circular economy and bioeconomy, and related global goals including those for climate, biodiversity and sustainable development. The participation of the private sector and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in the work of the Committee and the Commission will be actively sought, in line with the ECE and FAO organizational policies and rules of procedure. Increased participation from various relevant stakeholders should be encouraged.

36. **Human rights, youth inclusion, gender mainstreaming and respect of the rights of people with disabilities:** The IPoW gives due consideration to human rights, including indigenous and local community engagement and making the concerns and experiences of women, men, youth and people with disabilities an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its activities. This ensures that all people benefit equitably, and inequality is not perpetuated (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1997). Gender mainstreaming and respecting the rights of people with disabilities is a central part of ECE and FAO's strategic frameworks and their policies and programmes. Outreach to youth will be an integral part of the implementation of the IPoW.

Annex (to be added)

ANNEX 1: ToRs of the Teams of Specialists (tbd. at COFFI in 2025)

ANNEX 2: Guidelines for the establishments of expert groups (same as in IPoW 2021-2025)

ANNEX 3: Indicative table of thematic priorities with organizational responsibilities, fund allocations (RB) and XB requirements (tbd. at the consultations on the Integrated Programme of Work (hybrid – English only) on 22 May 2024) [Switzerland: proposes to prioritize themes]

END – 24.04.2024
