

Hungarian contribution to the strategic review of the Integrated Programme of Work on Forests and Timber of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission

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1. *What should be the **strategic objective** of the integrated programme of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission, taking account of the needs of the region, inputs from other actors in the area, and the comparative advantages of the two partners?*

Thank to the open and transparent manner of the process and the wide participation in the first strategic review in 2001 there is little need to modify the strategic objective of the two sister bodies, and we evaluate the integrated programme of work that guides the realization of this objective as sufficiently effective and useful. (It should also be born in mind that the first review was well based on the experiences of several years of cooperation, and the past three years is a quite short period in strategic terms to generate strong needs for strategic changes. By other words, the frequency of strategic reviews needs some considerations as well, which may lead to the conclusion that such reviews are more effective if performed in 5-10 years intervals. Sufficient monitoring mechanisms can ensure the necessary fine-tuning in between two reviews.)

Taking into account the most recent developments of the international forestry dialogue, it would be useful to make it visible in the objective that the bodies contribute to the implementation and further development of sustainable forest management (SFM), as a conceptual and practical response of forestry to the challenges of sustainable development. This could be displayed as one element of either the “MANDATE” or the “MISSION”.

As for the “STRATEGIES”, it deserves some consideration that in the light of the recent changes, especially the accession of 8 CITs to the EU, the focus of the attention may shift towards the newly independent states, therefore efforts could rightly promote their integration to the ECE region. With this change of formulation the differences in the membership of the two bodies could not have any effects on implementation, and “STRATEGIES” would be fully in accord with “MISSION”.

2. *What major work areas should be covered by the integrated programme of work ?*

The five major work areas as stated in the current programme of work should remain unchanged in the coming years. The decision to focus the attention on these areas is justified by the results of the work of the last years, and UNECE/FAO is well recognized by its contribution in almost all these fields.

3. *What should be its main activities and outputs, taking account of the strategic objective and availability of resources?*

We see potentials for increasing the efficiency by slight changes within some major work areas.

- In Work area 1 “Markets and statistics” 1.4 Monitoring of markets for certified forest products can be merged with 1.1 and 1.2
- In Work area 2 “Forest resource assessment” the role to be played in connection with C&I for SFM can be clarified further. Within the region two C&I processes are relevant: the Montreal process and the MCPFE. There are two options here:
 - The mandate of improving concepts can be transferred to the processes themselves (as it happened so far with contribution from UNECE/FAO), so the main role remains supplying data, not only for forest resources but for a much wider set of C&I

- UNECE/FAO may play a more substantial role in conceptual development building on the expertise represented by its teams of specialists and networks of national correspondents, but such decision will immediately have resource implications on the secretariat's side
- In work area 5 “Policy and cross-sectoral issues” increasing emphasis can be put on the cross-sectoral issues (trade, energy, environment, labour) building on the lucky situation, that Geneva hosts a number of international institutions which are or may be linked in a way or other to forestry issues. The work programme can motivate such cross-sectoral dialogue and cooperation

4. What methods of work should it employ?

Considering the current level of resource constrains worldwide the existing methods seem to be an optimal combination of cost-efficiency and productivity. The system of team of specialists is sufficiently flexible to allow member states to contribute “in kind” to achieving regional goals as their circumstances allow.

5. What resources should it aim to mobilise, and how?

Although difficult to describe how, but member states may wish to consider urging the respective international organizations to increase the professional staff by at least 1 post (i.e. one officer for each of the major work areas). The Committee and the Commission representatives can deliver this message to their governments also asking them to consider seconding experts for limited period of time, as an alternative. On the occasion of this strategic review appreciation should be expressed towards those countries who have already contributed to the implementation of the programme of work in any ways.

6. Is its formal structure (mandates, permanent bodies etc.) adapted to the needs?

No change is needed now.

7. How should its success be measured and monitoring and self-evaluation be implemented?

Each activity can be considered as a project and key elements of project management methods can be introduced in designing and timing these activities. By defining milestones and deliverables performance can be evaluated against them. Such evaluation would be part of the mandate of the teams and the self-evaluation sheets should be provided for the parent bodies for consideration.

The system may also include an escalation scheme which ensures that each problem is addressed on the lowest possible level were the enabling conditions for solving the problem are available.

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