

Strategic review of the Integrated programme of work on forests and timber of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission

Comments from the Ministry of Agriculture of Norway

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General remark

The first strategic review, in 2000-2001, was carried out as a comprehensive process. Norway was, and still is quite satisfied with the result. In our view there has not been any considerable shifts in political priorities, or other particular circumstances that require major changes in the strategic direction of the programme of work for the next period.

Questions to answer

What should be the strategic objective of the integrated programme of work?

We have no concrete proposal for how to formulate a strategic objective.

It might be more pertinent to define a strategic objective of the Timber Committee and the European Forestry Commission rather than of the integrated work programme as such, as the programme is an implementation instrument of the two organisations.

The objective of the integrated programme of work should be to realise the mandates and goals of the ECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission through concrete and coordinated activities and actions. The programme of work is the main instrument of the Committee and the Commission, and should promote synergies and cooperation between them, as well as with other regional and international bodies, and promote SFM in the region.

The strategies agreed upon at the last strategic review in 2001 are still relevant.

What major work areas should be covered and what should be the main activities and outputs?

In our view, we should retain the five existing work areas also for the next period. The relative priority of the different areas, as well as the resource allocation between them should be examined.

Based on the mandates and the comparative advantages of the organisations, we think the work area 4: “Technology, management and training“ should have lower priority than the other work areas.

Further, we wish to underline that the work area 3: EFSOS will move into a new stage in the next period. Most of the existing activities in the work programme will be completed in short time. We think there should be outlook study activities (i.a. thematic analysis) also in the next period, and it might be appropriate to keep the work area in the work programme. The resources allocated to this area should though in any case be reduced.

Activities and outputs under work area 1: markets and statistics has been modified the last years. From focusing mainly on annual statistics on production, trade and prices of traditional forest products, there has been a movement towards more trend studies as well as discussions and analysis of market developments with emphasis on important thematic issues on the policy and market arenas. We strongly welcome this shift and wish the work area to be further developed in this direction.

Emerging issues of high political interest should be included in the programme. At this stage we wish to highlight the following issues:

- illegal activities, law enforcement and governance - with a focus on illegal logging and related trade
- wood energy
- markets for non-wood goods and services

These issues could be incorporated into existing work areas (markets and statistics, policy and cross-sectoral issues)

In general, high priority should be given to activities that promote synergies between the ECE/FAO and the MCPFE and its work programme established in October 2003.

Methods of work, resources, formal structure, measuring of success, monitoring and self-evaluation

We have no comments or proposals for changes at this stage.