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# **Assessment of the relevance of the 2014- 2017 UNECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work to the needs of member States and challenges in the forest sector**

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Produced for UNECE

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Final Report August 2016

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## ABBREVIATIONS

COFFI	UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry
COFO	FAO Committee on Forestry
ECE region	Countries of Europe, North America, Central and Western Asia
EFC	FAO European Forestry Commission
EECCA	Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia
EFI	European Forest Institute
EFSOS	European Forest Sector Outlook Study
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FPAMR	Forest Products Annual Market Review
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GOF	Global Objectives on Forests
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPoW	Integrated Programme of Work
IUFRO	International Union of Forest Research Organizations
JWP	Joint Working Party
LCA	Life Cycle Assessment
MRV	Measurement, reporting and verification
N/A	No answer
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD-DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
RFC	Regional Forestry Commission
SDGs	Sustainable Developments Goals
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SME	Small and medium enterprise
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToS	Teams of Specialists
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
US	United States
WA	IPoW Work Area

Given the large sample of stakeholders interviewed, positions and opinions reported in this evaluation are not necessarily those expressed officially by the UN member States or Observers.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Integrated Programme of Work (IPoW) 2014-2017 of the COFFI and EFC sets out to ‘Support member countries and relevant stakeholders in their efforts to sustainably manage and use ECE-region forests so that they provide products and ecosystem services to the benefit of society’. The **purpose of this evaluation** was to assess the relevance of the IPoW to the needs of member states and challenges in the forest sector. **Key questions for the evaluation** were how the IPoW addressed regional and national challenges, whether support provided was relevant to addressing challenges, whether previously identified needs remain valid and what the upcoming challenges and needs are. In order to find answers to these questions, an online survey was sent to more than 2600 stakeholders. A total of 61 responses were obtained, with the majority of respondents affiliated to the IPoW either as COFFI/EFC delegate, member of a Team of Specialists, Joint Working Party member, or occasional participant. The responses came from 30 of 56 the member countries, plus responses from international organizations and one non-member country. Additionally, seven expert interviews were conducted to back-up the main findings and conclusions of the survey.

The main findings are that **the work of COFFI/EFC, the Joint Working Party and the Teams of Specialists (ToS) is indeed relevant to the region’s efforts in tackling challenges**. The ToS on Sustainable Forest Products, the ToS Forest Products Statistics and the ToS on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management stood out as particularly helpful in tackling national challenges. Concerning provision of support, respondents were asked to comment on how various categories of outputs contributed to their national needs. The evaluation found that **normative products, in particular those dealing with forest products statistics, are highly appreciated by all parties** and there is trust in data collection and treatment methods. **Meetings and workshops were praised as important platforms for communication and information exchange** among various stakeholders. However, several respondents from non-OECD countries mentioned **that insufficient availability of funds was restricting their meeting attendance**. Several also cautioned that the **focus of discussions had shifted too strongly to Western European issues** and that to remain relevant to all member countries, a more balanced pan-ECE region approach would be favorable. Asked about the validity of the needs identified in the IPoW 2014-2017, 86% of respondents answered that they are either ‘still valid’ or ‘still valid but need to be updated’. **Numerous comments were provided on new regional challenges and national needs**. Three areas that stand out are the need for strategies to cope with climate change and forest disturbances (e.g. pests, fires), questions around forest resources and biomass, and the green economy with a focus on capacity building.

Building on these findings, the evaluation **recommends** to (i) maintain the focus on the value chain from forests to forest products/timber and markets, (ii) continue using meetings for knowledge brokering and experience exchange, (iii) use joint meetings to convene with stakeholders from the entire northern forest belt, (iv) foster sectoral themes that do not receive sufficient attention in other fora (e.g. green economy, wood energy, adaptation to climate change, wood in the building sector), (v) use the Rovaniemi Action Plan as a basis for institutional development in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, (vi) coordinate actions with work for other international agreements, (vii) reflect on private sector integration into the work of UNECE/FAO.

## INTRODUCTION

The UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section is jointly organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) European Forestry Commission (EFC). The Section serves as the secretariat to the UNECE and FAO sectorial governing bodies – ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC) and coordinates and leads the implementation of their ‘Integrated Programme of Work’ (IPoW). The IPoW, which is developed in cycles of four years by the COFFI and the EFC, sets the main framework for their work. The IPoW 2014-2017 was adopted by the joint session of the COFFI and EFC in December 2013 in Rovaniemi, Finland. The overall goal of the IPoW 2014-2017 is to “Support member countries and relevant stakeholders in their efforts to sustainably manage and use ECE-region forests so that they provide products and ecosystem services to benefit society”.

## REGIONAL COVERAGE

COFFI and EFC coordinate activities on forests in the ECE region, i.e. Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus and North America. The IPoW addresses all member countries of COFFI, which are all the 56 member countries of the Economic Commission for Europe.

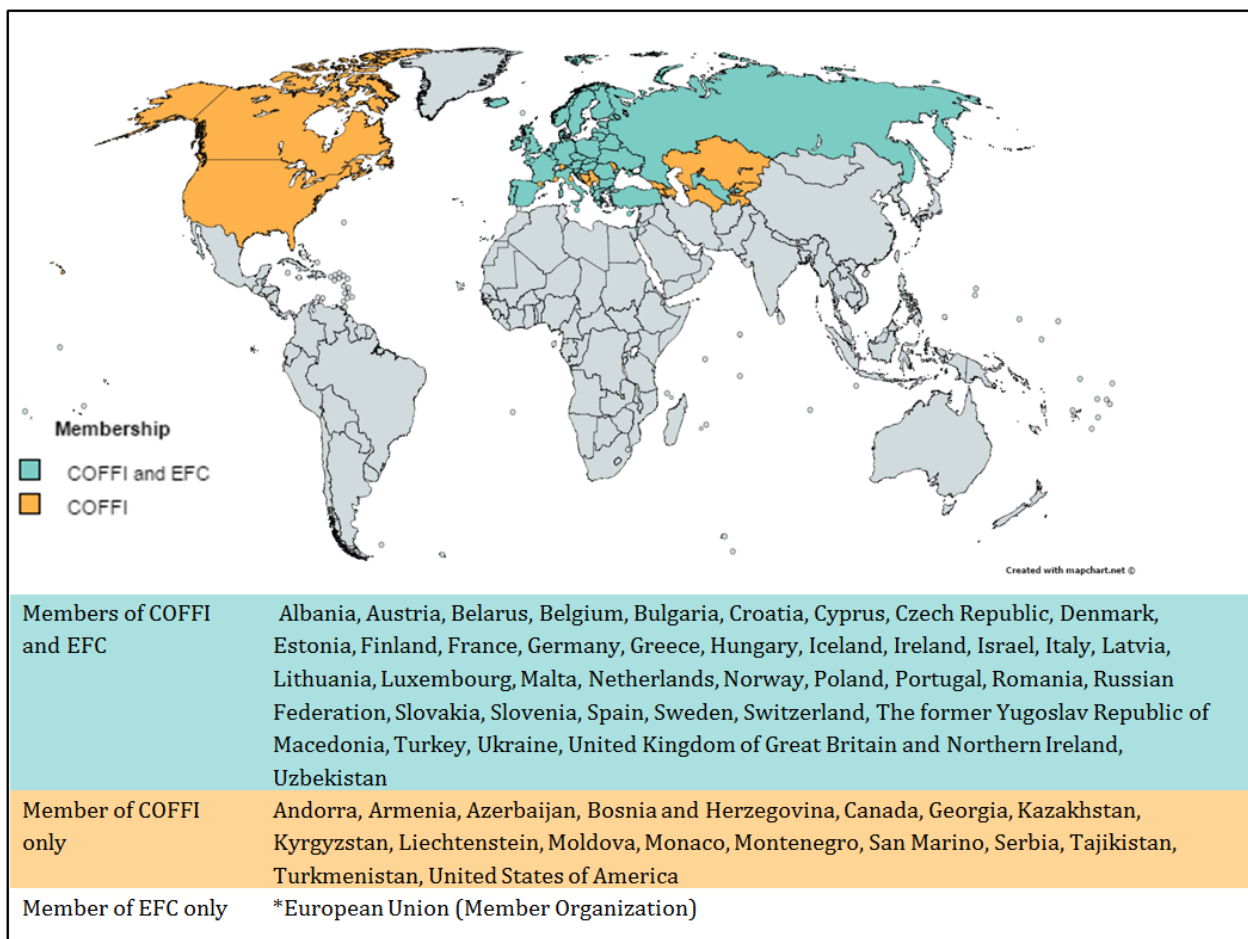


FIGURE 1 GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE OF THE IPOW

Thirty-nine of the COFFI members are simultaneously members of EFC. The European Union as a member organization is the only EFC member that is not a COFFI member. Figure 1 depicts the regional coverage and lists the member countries in detail. Together these countries account for more than 40% of the world's forest cover.

## IPOW STRUCTURE

The Integrated Programme of Work is agreed by the member states' delegates to COFFI and EFC. The overall goal of supporting member countries' and stakeholders' efforts in sustainably managing and using the region's forests is to be achieved by providing the best available information, facilitating policy dialogues and communication and building capacity. These objectives lay the foundation for the four work areas that are at the core of the IPoW:

- Work area 1: Data, monitoring and assessment
- Work area 2: Policy dialogue and advice
- Work area 3: Communication and outreach
- Work area 4: Capacity-building

Figure 2 outlines the organizational structure of the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section and the various bodies' relationships to the IPoW. The parent bodies COFFI and EFC hold the ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the IPoW. The Bureau of COFFI and the Executive Committee of the EFC oversee the implementation and provide guidance as necessary. The Teams of Specialists (ToS) are mandated by COFFI and EFC and report to the Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management. They contribute to the different work areas of the IPoW in the form of providing guidance and advice, conducting supportive activities, e.g. outreach activities to country-level experts, or the production of specific outputs such as studies and reports.

The IPoW provides detailed information on each of the four work areas. For the sake of obtaining an overview of their content, Table 4 to Table 7 in the Annex follow the structure of a results framework and categorize the IPoW text into (i) activities, (ii) expected outputs and (iii) assumptions and risks.

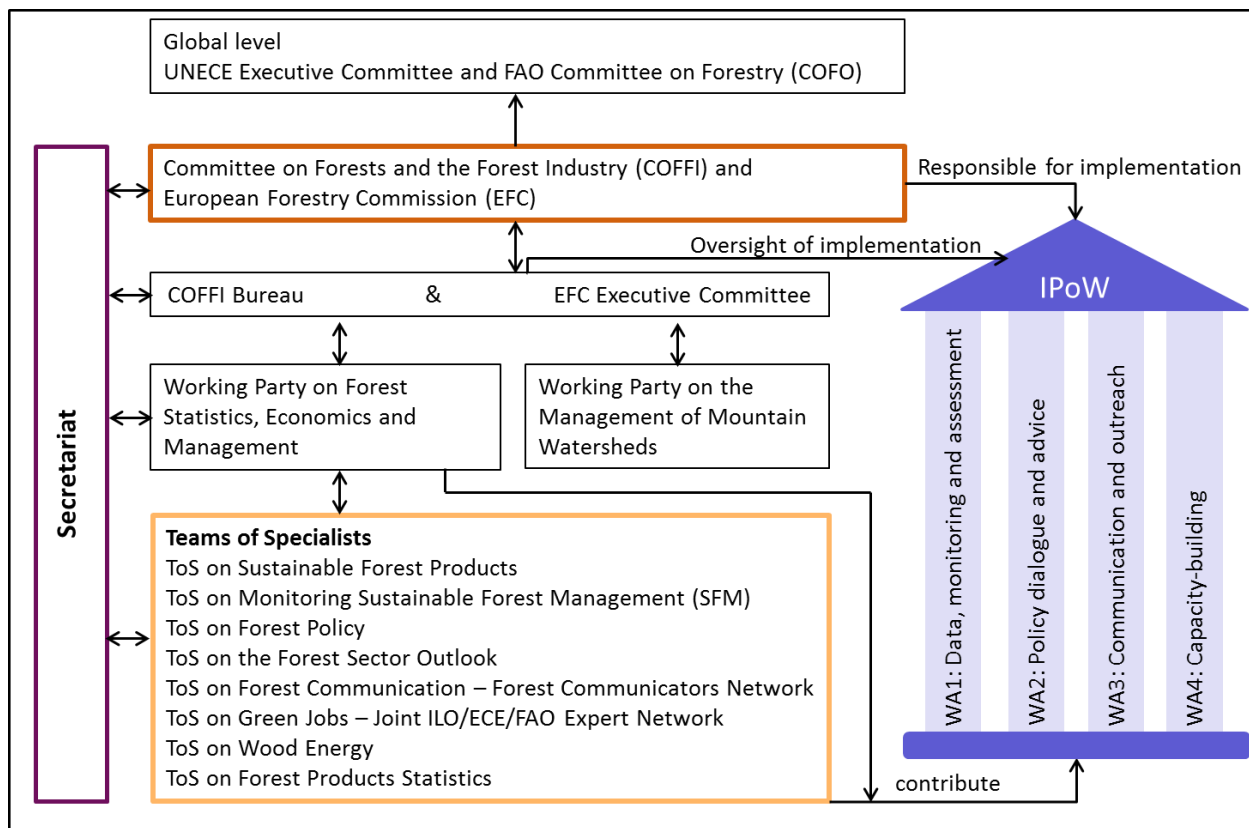


FIGURE 2 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND THE IPOW

(adapted from <http://www.unece.org/forests/about-us/governance.html>)

## OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODIES ON FORESTS

Apart from COFFI and EFC there are other international bodies dealing with forests at the global level, in particular the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), and at the regional level Forest Europe, six Regional Forest Commissions initially established by FAO, and the European Forest Institute (EFI). In addition, two overarching international arrangements promote sustainable forest management, enhance cooperation and synergies on forest related issues and support the work of UNFF and its member countries, namely the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF).

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) is a United Nations body, which is composed of all Member States of the United Nations and specialized agencies, with the main objective to promote "... the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end". The IUFRO is a global network for forest science cooperation. It unites more than 15,000 scientists in almost 700 Member Organizations in over 110 countries, with a mission to advance research excellence and knowledge sharing, and to foster the development of science-based solutions to forest-related challenges for the benefit of forests and people worldwide. Forest Europe is a voluntary process at the ministerial level that



focuses on forest policies and strategies with a core competency in sustainable forest management. It is a pan-European process including 46 European countries and the European Union. Established by the FAO Conference the Regional Forestry Commissions bring together the Heads of Forestry in each major region of the world every two years to address the most important forestry issues both on policy and on technical matters. FAO's Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia is located in Budapest, Hungary, from where it provides and coordinates FAO policy and technical assistance to Member Countries in the Region. EFI facilitates and stimulates forest-related networking and promotes the dissemination of unbiased and policy-relevant information on forests and forestry. It also advocates for forest research and for the use of scientifically sound information as a basis for forest policies.

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

According to UNECE an Evaluation is defined as “a systematic and discrete process, as objective as possible, to determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and/or sustainability of any element of a programme’s performance in relation to their objectives. The objective of evaluation is to enable the Secretariat and member States to engage in systematic reflection with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the programmes by altering their content and, if necessary, reviewing their objectives.”(UNECE 2014, p.1).

The purpose of this particular evaluation as stated in the Terms of Reference is to ‘assess the relevance of the 2014-2017 Integrated Programme of Work to the challenges in the forest sector and needs of member States’. The evaluation builds on an analysis of current challenges in forestry and the forest sector in the countries covered by the IPoW. Moreover it takes into consideration the differences or changes in countries’ needs as stated at the time the current IPoW was elaborated and the time of the writing of the evaluation, i.e. May 2016. The results of the evaluation could feed into the Strategic Review process of the work of ECE and FAO for the period 2014-2017 and contribute to the preparation of the next IPoW for the time period 2018-2021.

In terms of scope, the evaluation covers all countries that are members of COFFI and EFC. However, due to limitations of time, the evaluation was explicitly planned to thematically focus only on the **relevance** of the IPoW, disregarding other aspects, such as effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, which are further typical criteria for evaluations (UNECE 2014). The key questions for the evaluation as set out in the Terms of Reference are listed below.

Based on these questions, the evaluation is expected to:

- Identify areas/topics relevant to member States and to the needs of forests in the region, including those that were not addressed by the IPoW 2014-2017;
- Identify areas/topics, which are no longer relevant to the IPoW;
- Develop recommendations on topics which could be addressed in the future Programme of Work.

These questions call both for an assessment of the breadth of the regional and national challenges in the timber and forest sector and an assessment of the depth to which member countries’ needs

were addressed. More information on how these given questions were operationalized and addressed in the empirical survey is provided in the methodology section.

Key evaluation questions
<p>How did the IPoW address challenges?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did governing, subsidiary and advisory bodies contribute to this task? In particular, what was the role of COFFI and EFC, the Joint Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management, and the Teams of Specialists?</li> <li>• How did the activities and outputs of the IPoW contribute to addressing challenges?</li> </ul>
<p>How did IPoW support member States in addressing their needs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did governing, subsidiary and advisory bodies support member States? In particular, what was the role of COFFI and EFC, the Joint Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management, and the Teams of Specialists?</li> <li>• How did the activities and outputs of the IPoW contribute to responding member States' needs?</li> </ul>
<p>To what extent are the challenges and needs identified during the 2011-2012 Strategic Review still valid?</p>
<p>What are the new challenges and needs relevant to the IPoW?</p>
<p>To what extent did the IPoW address challenges and respond to needs of member States?</p>

## PREVIOUS REVIEWS

The 'ECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work' for the period 2008-2013 was the predecessor to the current IPoW. Its main objective was defined as 'strengthening the forest sector'. The review of this program resulted in the '2013 Strategic Review of the ECE/FAO Joint Programme of Work', which is a compilation of four documents, namely the 'Results of the Survey on the ECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work' (ECE/TIM/2012/7), the 'Results of Teams of Specialists Internal Evaluations' (ECE/TIM/2012/6), the 'Secretariat's assessment of work and outputs' (ECE/TIM/2012/8), and the 'Inputs of the joint bureaux to the 2013 Strategic Review and the 2014-2017 joint programme of work' (ECE/TIM/2012/9).

The 'Results of the Survey on the ECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work' builds on survey data that was collected from a broad sample of stakeholders and thus is the part of the previous evaluation that most closely resembles the scope and method of the current evaluation. It covered the following topics: an assessment of overall results and shortfalls of the IPoW, priorities for the IPoW 2014-2017, governance and management of the IPoW, assessments of the Working Party on Management of Mountainous Watersheds, the ToS, Outputs of the IPoW, as well as capacity building activities, levels of participation and contribution of the members and finally the role of the ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section in the European forestry scene.

One of the main results was that the Programme of Work 2008-2013 and its implementation were largely assessed as satisfactory by the respondents. However, shortfalls identified were deficient financial resources and a lack of priority setting, limited capacity building activities and participation of EECCA countries, missing linkages with the national level and insufficient attention

paid to climate change adaptation. In the scope of this survey the gender aspects were not a major topic.

Priority areas identified for the period 2014-2017 were forest resources, wood energy, forest product markets, green economy, forest forecast/outlook, climate change and adaptation. Topics that, on the contrary, were given lesser priority for this period were forest communication, storms and fires, social and cultural issues.

For the sake of brevity, the other parts of the '2013 Strategic Review of the ECE/FAO Joint Programme of Work' will not be discussed or summarized here. For more details on the 2013 Review, please refer to (<http://www.unece.org/forests/quicklinks/2013-strategic-review.html>).

## METHODOLOGY

The preparation of this evaluation consisted of a review of documents of key outputs of the IPoW, an online survey and interviews. This section presents an evaluation matrix (see Table 1) on how the given key questions were broken down and how the necessary information was collected. Details on the empirical methods are provided below.

As mentioned earlier, the focus of this evaluation is on **relevance**. The definition of relevance as given by UNECE is “Relevance is the extent to which an activity, expected accomplishment or strategy is pertinent or significant for achieving the related objective, and the extent to which the objective is significant to the problem addressed. Retrospectively, the question of relevance often becomes a question as to whether the objectives of an intervention or its design are still appropriate given changed circumstances.” (UNECE 2014, p.2). For development aid program evaluations, a standard reference is the Glossary of the OECD/DAC, which very similarly defines relevance as “The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries’ requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners’ and donors’ policies. Note: Retrospectively, the question of relevance often becomes a question as to whether the objectives of an intervention or its design are still appropriate given changed circumstances” (Development Assistance Committee 2002).

A more general definition is given in the Merriam Webster dictionary, which defines relevance as “1 a : relation to the matter at hand, b : practical and especially social applicability 2 : the ability (as of an information retrieval system) to retrieve material that satisfies the needs of the user” (Merriam-Webster). Although from the field of health care, an interesting observation on the assessment of relevance that appears worth citing is the following: “Relevance addresses whether the results of the study/apply to the setting of interest to the decision maker. There is no correct answer for relevance. Relevance is determined by each decision maker, and the relevance assessment determined by one decision maker will not necessarily apply to other decision makers” (Berger et al. 2014).

Key questions on the relevance of the IPoW were given in the ToR. These key questions were used to guide the development of survey questions for an online survey.

Aspect of relevance	Key question	Data sources	Method for data analysis	Section in findings chapter
What were the regional challenges at the time the IPoW 2014-2017 was elaborated?	Which challenges were mentioned in previous IPoW outputs?	Review of UNECE literature	summary	Previous regional challenges
What are the regional/ national challenges today (as of May 2016)?	Regional level : survey Q7, Q8; National level: survey Q13	Survey	Descriptive statistics	Current regional challenges Current national challenges
How did the IPoW address the challenges?	Regional level : survey Q11, Q12 National level: survey Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17	Survey	Descriptive statistics	Addressing challenges

How was support provided?	National level: survey Q18, Q19, Q20, General: Q21	Survey	Descriptive statistics	Level of support
Are the needs identified during the 2011-2012 Strategic Review still valid in the region?	Regional level: survey Q22, Q23	Survey	Descriptive statistics	Upcoming challenges and future needs
What are the upcoming challenges and needs?	Regional level : Survey Q9, Q10 National level: Survey Q24	Survey	Descriptive statistics	Upcoming challenges and future needs

TABLE 1: EVALUATION MATRIX

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of the literature review was to gain an understanding of the regional challenges. The focus was laid on UNECE documents. Academic literature or other third sources were not considered. Key sources included the Forest Products Annual Market Reviews of 2013, 2014 and 2015, Forests in the ECE Region, the Geneva Timber and Forest Study Paper 32 on the Lviv Forum, Rovaniemi Action Plan and the Report of the joint session of the seventy-third session of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry and thirty-eighth European Forestry Commission in Engelberg, 2015. For more information on the specific issues such as gender aspects or current and future development trends in forestry, further literature was consulted: Time for action. Changing the gender situation in forestry. Report of the team of specialists on gender and forestry, the European Forest Sector Outlook Study II, The North American Forest Sector Outlook Study. 2006-2030 and the Russian Federation Forest Sector Outlook Study to 2030.

The information obtained through the literature review was used to develop the questions on challenges at the national and regional levels for the online survey.

## ONLINE SURVEY

The online survey contained twenty-four questions (see Annex 2). The questions that were structured according to the key questions given in the ToR (see evaluation matrix above), were developed by the evaluation team and discussed with the secretariat of the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section.

The link to the online survey was sent to a mailing list of more than 2600 stakeholders by the mentioned secretariat. The intention was to provide a wide range of stakeholders in the 56 countries the opportunity to provide opinions and contribute to this evaluation. An email with a link to the survey was sent out May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016 and reminders were sent in the next weeks. On May 13<sup>th</sup> a Russian version of the survey was circulated. The survey was closed May 20<sup>th</sup>. The data set obtained until this date contained few answers from COFFI/EFC delegates. To increase the number of responses from the delegates, another reminder was sent and the survey was put online again and remained open throughout the rest of the study. It was made clear to respondents that responses would be treated confidentially and individual answers would only be visible by the evaluator.

During the data collection time period, a major focus of the international debate in a large part of the UNECE region was on the crisis in Syria and the flows of migrants coming to Europe. Related to forests, there was large media coverage of forest fires in Canada.

A total of 61 valid responses were registered. Of these 61 responses that are used for the analysis 6 were submitted in the Russian version. Compared to the number of stakeholders on the mailing list that received the link to the online survey, the response rate is less than 3%. However, responses came from 31 countries (excluding international organizations). Further excluding the response from Morocco, which is neither a member of COFFI or EFC, the country coverage corresponds to about 54% of all COFFI and EFC member countries. Overall 11 respondents (18%) were female, of which 18% were COFFI/EFC delegates, 36% belong to Team of Specialists and 46% was categorized as others. Note that the share of female delegates among all COFFI/EFC delegates is 16%. On average, it took the respondents 26 minutes to answer the survey.

Table 2 shows the breakdown of responses by country. Responses were received from all geographical areas of the region, Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus and North America. Slightly more than half of the respondents are directly affiliated to the IPoW either as COFFI/EFC delegate (30%), ToS member (28%), occasional participant (5%), or JWP delegate (2%). The remaining respondents belonged to the group “Other stakeholder (private sector, academia, NGO, etc.)” (26%), and other (8%), while 2% provided no information on their background.

Country (Responses)		
Albania (1)	Germany (3)	Russia (4)
Austria (2)	International Organization (2)	Serbia (2)
Belgium (2)	Italy (1)	Spain (2)
Bosnia and Herzegovina (1)	Kyrgyz Republic (2)	Sweden (2)
Bulgaria (1)	Lithuania (1)	Switzerland (3)
Canada (2)	Montenegro (1)	Turkey (2)
Croatia (1)	Morocco (1)	Ukraine (4)
Czech Republic (1)	Netherlands (1)	United Kingdom (2)
Finland (4)	Norway (1)	USA (4)
France (1)	Poland (1)	Uzbekistan (1)
Georgia (1)	Republic of Armenia (1)	N/A (3)

TABLE 2 SURVEY RESPONSES BY COUNTRY

## INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with seven selected persons. The evaluator was free in the choice of interview partners and care was taken to select interview partners representing different parts of the ECE Region. Chatham House Rule applies, meaning that the identity and affiliation of the interview partners is only known to the evaluator and will not be disclosed. The interviews were conducted after the data collected through the online survey was analyzed. The purpose of the interviews was to back-up the evaluator’s findings and conclusions on the relevance of the IPoW. This was deemed particularly important, given that the number of responses from COFFI/EFC

delegates in the online survey was fairly low. This limitation is further discussed in the section below.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY

The invitation to participate in the survey was sent by the secretariat of the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section to a very large and diverse group of more than 2600 stakeholders, for which no secondary data is available. An advantage of choosing such a participatory approach for an evaluation is that a broad range of opinions can be collected, and all stakeholders interested can have a say. However, it comes with the drawback of knowing little about the sample to which the survey was sent and makes it impossible to state whether the respondents are representative of the sample. In consequence, it is not possible to draw inferences from the survey responses to a larger population. However, the results do provide a useful snapshot of opinions of interested international stakeholders from diverse backgrounds.

A technical limitation of the online survey was that a fairly large number of incomplete surveys were submitted, creating problems with non-response entries in the dataset. Our assumption is that some stakeholders only wanted to check on the survey and complete it at a later point in time. A recommendation for future evaluations is to use a survey tool with a 'save and resume' option.

A further issue arose in the translation of the English version of the online survey to Russian. The questions on the greatest challenges required rankings in the English version, while in the Russian version respondents were only asked to list challenges, without providing rankings. To correct for this mistake, the respondents of the Russian surveys were later asked to provide the ranking by email. Moreover, answer categories may have differed in some nuances from the English version. Whenever there was doubt on the comparability of the two versions of the survey, it was noted in the findings section.

Gender balance in the forest sector and the implementation of gender aspects into relevant forest policy strategies was not explicitly addressed in the survey. It was rather anticipated that feedback on gender issues would be provided in the optional comments. As women's participation and leadership in forestry is often overlooked by programs and management approaches in the sector (UNECE, FAO 2015c), a recommendation for future evaluations is to formulate concrete survey questions on this very important issue, which is often missing in the agenda.

## FINDINGS

The findings section is structured along the lines of the key questions that were given in the ToR of the evaluation and presents both the outcomes of the survey and the interviews. The section on the survey findings presents an overall assessment of the current IPoW as well as previous and current challenges at regional and national levels. Building on these findings, answers from the survey on how the IPoW addresses existing challenges are presented. Next respondents' views on how the IPoW supported member states in addressing their needs are summarized. The section closes with an outlook on upcoming challenges and future needs. The section on the interview findings recaps the observations of the interviewees to the main findings from the online survey. It is organized along the key topics (i) the relevance of normative products, (ii) the relevance of meetings, workshops and events and (iii) the relevance of technical and policy work of UNECE/COFFI.

### A. SURVEY FINDINGS

**The IPoW provides a platform for dialogue and a framework to address challenges in the region, but faces challenges in creating impulses for new national strategies and in fostering national stakeholder engagement.**

For an overall assessment of the current IPoW, respondents were asked to indicate to what degree they agree to a number of statements. The statements and the corresponding answers are given in Figure 3. Strong consent was issued for the statements that the IPoW provides a platform for dialogue and that it provides a framework to address challenges in the region. The highest disagreement was expressed on the statements that the IPoW creates impulses for new national strategies and that it helps foster national stakeholder engagement.

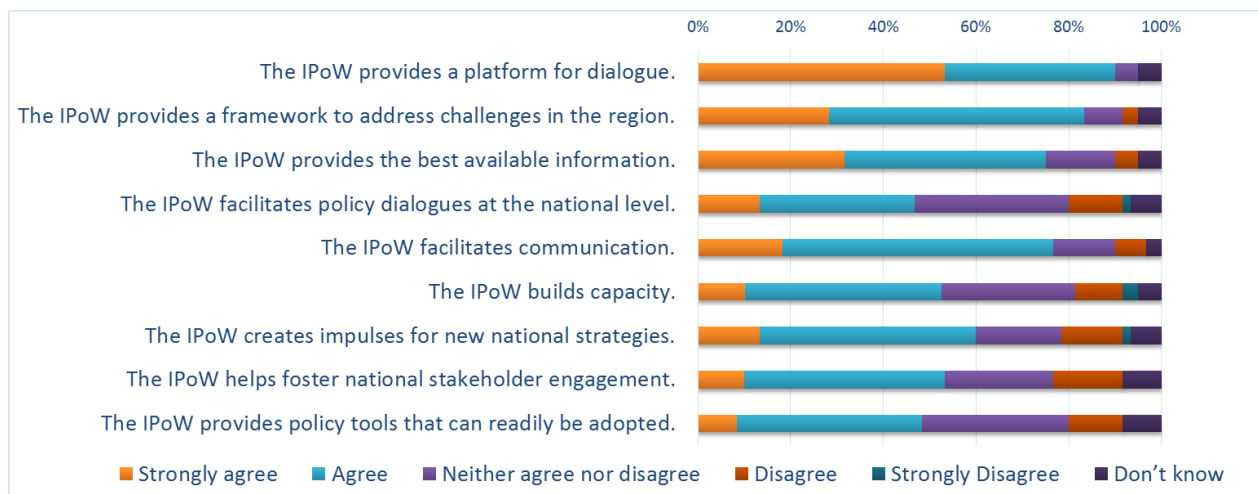


FIGURE 3: GENERAL ASSESSMENT (NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 60)



## A.1. PREVIOUS REGIONAL CHALLENGES

**Previously identified challenges throughout the ECE region were in the areas of timber production, markets, biodiversity conservation and climate change. Governance and infrastructural issues related to timber production were issues particularly in the ECE East, Northern and Central Asia, whereas forest disturbances and structural changes were primary issues in the ECE West.**

The review of selected UNECE documents revealed a number of challenges in the areas of production, markets and forest governance and gender as well as in the area of biodiversity conservation, climate change and forest disturbances. Although for the ease of analysis it is helpful to categorize challenges into groups, in practice challenges are often closely linked through feedback loops at national and international levels.

Related to timber production, challenges were reported for some regions of Eastern Europe and Central Asia due to a lack of infrastructure and the general remoteness of the areas (UNECE, FAO 2013, FAO 2012). The markets for wood and wood products are witnessing structural changes in some of the traditional markets, in part due to demand increasing in Asia (United Nations, FAO 2015b) but also due to changing consumption patterns in the ECE region, such as the decreasing demand for paper, paperboard and pulpwood in the ECE West (United Nations, FAO 2012). Reasons being, *inter alia*, a general shift to electronic communication and decreased demand for newsprint (United Nations, FAO 2015a). Fluctuations on the housing market, in particular in North America, are also impacting demand for wood products. It is noteworthy that demand for green construction material, such as cross-laminated timber, is increasing in the US and in Europe (United Nations, FAO 2012 & 2015a).

Wood energy markets are developing strongly and trade in industrial wood pellets among different countries in the ECE region has gained momentum (FAO/ECE Agriculture and Timber Division 2013). In the ECE region, wood is the most important source for renewable energy (United Nations, FAO 2015a). However, in countries of Central-West and Central-East Europe, wood plays a very minor role in total energy supply (United Nations, FAO 2011 & 2012; FAO 2012). In conjunction with structural changes in the market, there have been substantial job losses in the forest sector, hitting those hardest that live in poor rural communities (United Nations, FAO 2015b). Concerning forest workers' well-being, it is mentioned that occupational safety should be improved and due consideration should be given to gender equality (United Nations, FAO 2015b). The Rovaniemi Action Plan (UNECE, FAO 2014) and other documents (UNECE, FAO 2015a & 2015c) also mention a number of possible actions related to gender, namely on developing gender strategies for the forest sector and streamlining these into forest policy strategies; improving the monitoring and analysis of the forest-sector workforce including gender aspects; reviewing and discussing at policy level main threats to the sustainability of the workforce including gender aspects and developing possible countermeasures; and finally reviewing gender aspects of the forest sector in the green economy and developing actions as appropriate. Poland served as an example for developing concrete national gender strategies for the forest sector and implementation activities of the Association of Women in Forestry (UNECE; FAO 2015b). In the last possible action special reference is made to

conclusions that were derived in a study on ‘Time for Action. Changing the gender situation in the forestry sector’ by a previous Team of Specialists on gender and forestry (FAO 2006).

Markets for non-wood forest goods remain challenging. Values for marketed non-wood forest goods and services are reported to be low in Central-East Europe (United Nations, FAO 2011). Unresolved challenges are also found in the area of forest ecosystem services that are not traded on markets. Recreational activities are a case in point. In some countries forests are open to the public for recreational purposes free of cost. Without a possibility to derive income from visitors, there are no incentives to develop forests especially for recreational purposes (UNECE, FAO 2015).

Moreover, it is often difficult to strike a balance between incentives to generate short-term benefits from forests and managing forests to secure long-term protective functions to the benefit of society (UNECE, FAO 2015). In some countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, low forest cover is even threatening forests’ abilities to produce protective functions (UNECE, FAO 2013). Overuse of forest resources especially for fuel wood is reported to cause forest degradation and erosion in the ECE South-East region (United Nations, FAO 2011 & 2015b).

Forest governance, in particular illegal logging for domestic use or for export is a challenge in some countries of ECE East and ECE South-East (United Nations, FAO 2015b). Illegal logging was also mentioned as a challenge for forests in a green economy in countries of Eastern Europe and Northern and Central Asia (UNECE, FAO 2013, FAO 2012).

Biodiversity conservation in forests is insufficient in some countries (United Nations, FAO 2011). Eutrophication in forest soils is a risk throughout the ECE region, causing soil imbalances in some countries (United Nations, FAO 2011). Forest fragmentation, which is a major threat to biodiversity, is also becoming a problem in some countries (United Nations, FAO 2011). Monitoring and measurement problems were stated as a major challenge in Europe in 2011 (Michalak 2011).

Given that the new SDG targets will require substantial monitoring efforts, it has been suggested to search for synergies between monitoring efforts by various international organizations for different purposes. Harmonizing indicators, where possible, can help avoid duplication and burdens of excessive monitoring (UNECE, FAO 2015).

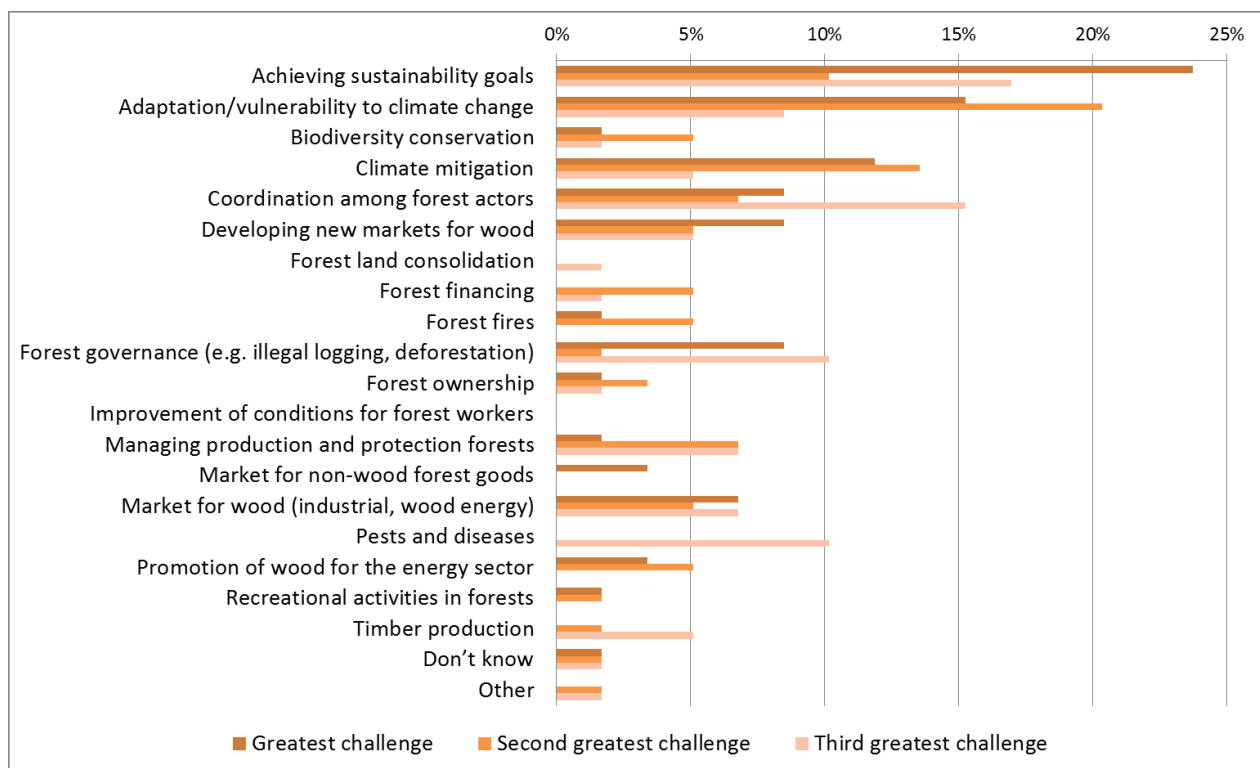
Climate change is a threat to the ECE region’s forests that can alter growing conditions and is intimately linked to forest disturbances, in particular fires and pests (United Nations, FAO 2015b). Forest fires are a threat to forests in the ECE West, i.e. Canada and the USA (United Nations, FAO 2012 & 2015b). Also the South-West of Europe has to deal with significant fire damage (United Nations, FAO 2011). Pests and diseases were mentioned as threat particularly to forests in the ECE West (United Nations, FAO 2012 & 2015b).

## A.2. CURRENT REGIONAL CHALLENGES

**The three most frequently mentioned regional challenges were achieving sustainability goals, adaptation/vulnerability to climate change and climate mitigation. However, among the non-OECD countries forest governance and coordination among forest actors was also**

**given high priority. Optional comments concerned climate change and risk management, sustainability and bioeconomy or governance.**

In the online survey, respondents were asked to rank the three greatest challenges in the region. The answer options were based on the challenges identified in the literature review on past regional challenges and were complemented with ideas given by the secretariat of the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section. Figure 4 shows the results by challenge. Due to a mistake in the translation, the Russian version of the survey required a list, but no ranking of the three greatest challenges. Although a ranking could later be supplemented by mail, this information was not received from 2 respondents. They are thus not included in Figure 4. “Achieving sustainability goals” was most often reported as the greatest regional challenge, followed by “Adaptation/vulnerability to climate change” and “Climate mitigation”.



**FIGURE 4: REGIONAL CHALLENGES**

(Note: 59 responses, 2 answers to Russian survey version excluded because they lacked a ranking)

Asked whether they expected these challenges to remain the most important challenges for the region 2018-2021, 93% of the respondents answered “yes”, while 7% answered “don’t know”.

Including the 2 answers provided through the Russian version of the survey and analyzing them together with the English responses, irrespective of the rank, the challenge “Achieving sustainability goals” was mentioned most often (16%) as one of the three greatest challenges. The next five challenges in descending frequency of mentioning are “adaptation/vulnerability to climate change”

(14%), “Climate mitigation” (10%), “coordination among forest actors” (10%), “forest governance (e.g. illegal logging, deforestation)” (7%), and “developing new markets for wood” (6%).

It is difficult to detect a pattern in responses between different geographical areas of the region or between countries in different forest zones. However, comparing respondents from OECD countries to those of non-OECD countries (and leaving out respondents from international organizations), it becomes apparent, that respondents from non-OECD countries put forest governance and coordination among forest actors second on the agenda while it was on the 8<sup>th</sup> place among the OECD country respondents. Likewise the challenge of developing new markets for wood was high on the agenda among OECD country respondents, but not a high priority among the non-OECD country respondents.

The survey provided space for optional comments on the regions’ challenges. The comments submitted are summarized in three groups below. Note that gender was not mentioned in any of the submitted optional comments.

- ⇒ **Climate change and risk management.** Some respondents explained that there is need for adaptation of European forests to climate change including protecting the forests against natural hazards and human induced threats. Others stated that pests and diseases combined with fire are changing the disturbance regimes. A further challenge that was mentioned was the management of forests’ multi-functional ecosystem services. In terms of policies it was stated that while uptake of forestry activities in climate policies is limited, a discussion on adaptation to climate change is necessary.
- ⇒ **Sustainability and bioeconomy.** Respondents mentioned that achieving sustainability goals in relation to the SDGs is a challenge. To others the coordination of MRV on the state of European forests is a challenge. Several challenges were mentioned in relation to the bioeconomy, in particular forest finance, profitable forest management, the forest sector’s role in a transition to a green economy and the promotion of green jobs. Others indicated that the valuation of ecosystem services and payments for environmental services are important challenges. Finally, urbanization and the tertiarization of the economy were mentioned as challenges.
- ⇒ **Governance.** It was stated that challenges arise from the weak visibility and political will inside and outside of the "forest sector" and failure to understand and communicate with other sectors. Another statement was that, the balance needs to be restored between the various functions of the forest in the policy arena, forest managers and the greater public because there is prevailing neglect of production, harvesting and marketing of forest products. A further comment was that in some countries, there are market regulations and large new administrative burdens for small businesses. A comment relating directly to the IPoW was that a focus should be on the Eastern part of the region.

### A.3. CURRENT NATIONAL CHALLENGES

**There is large heterogeneity among the current national challenges. However in summary the three most frequently mentioned greatest challenges are achieving sustainability goals, adaptation/vulnerability to climate change followed by coordination among forest actors.**

The respondents were also asked to provide information on their greatest national challenges. The answer options were the same as in the questions on regional challenges. Table 3 (on the following page) lists the answers given by country. For some countries more than one stakeholder responded to the survey. There can thus be several listings of one country per column. Moreover, if two stakeholders from one country provided the same answer, the country was listed only once per cell in the table. The data that was provided without a ranking is presented in the last column (see limitations section for explanations).

Figure 5 presents the summary results for the question on national challenges, again excluding two respondents who did not provide a ranking in the Russian version of the survey. Overall, achieving sustainability goals and adaptation/vulnerability to climate change were the two most frequently mentioned greatest challenges followed by coordination among forest actors.

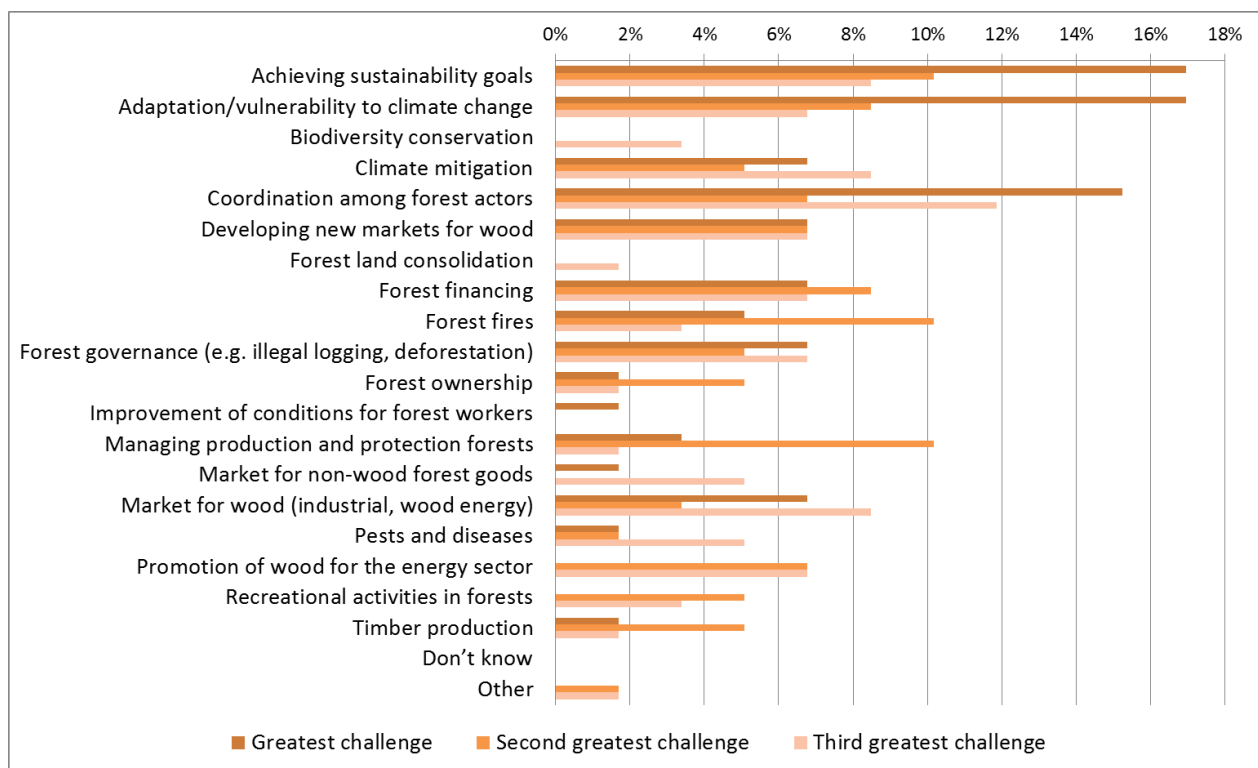


FIGURE 5: SUMMARY OF DATA ON NATIONAL CHALLENGES (59 RESPONSES)

National challenges	Greatest challenge	Second greatest challenge	Third greatest challenge	Without rank
<b>Achieving sustainability goals</b>	Belgium, Finland, Germany, IO, N/A, Poland, Russian Federation, USA	Austria, I.O., Morocco, N/A,	Canada, Germany, I.O., N/A, Netherlands	Kyrgyz Republic
<b>Adaptation/ vulnerability to climate change</b>	Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Morocco, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, USA	Norway, Poland, Spain, Ukraine	France, Russian Federation, Serbia, USA	
<b>Biodiversity conservation</b>			Croatia, Spain	Kyrgyz Republic
<b>Climate mitigation</b>	Albania, Finland, France, Germany	Canada, Croatia, Sweden	Germany, Norway, Switzerland, UK, Ukraine	
<b>Coordination among forest actors</b>	Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, N/A, Netherlands, Serbia, Ukraine, USA	Lithuania, Russian Federation, Switzerland, USA	Belgium, Finland, Germany, N/A, Poland, Switzerland, Ukraine	
<b>Developing new markets for wood</b>	Canada, Finland, Sweden	N/A, Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland	Finland, Turkey, USA	
<b>Forest land consolidation</b>			Lithuania	
<b>Forest financing</b>	Serbia, Spain, Ukraine	N/A, UK, Ukraine, Serbia, Russian Federation	Armenia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Russia	Kyrgyz Republic
<b>Forest fires</b>	N/A, Spain, Russian Federation	Albania, Russian Federation, Turkey, USA	N/A, Russian Federation	
<b>Forest governance (e.g. illegal logging, deforestation)</b>	Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russian Federation, Switzerland	Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine	Albania, Morocco, Russian Federation, Uzbekistan	Kyrgyz Republic
<b>Forest ownership</b>	Italy	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Spain	Belgium, Finland, N/A, Poland, Switzerland	
<b>Improvement of conditions for forest workers</b>	Uzbekistan			Kyrgyz Republic
<b>Managing production and protection forests</b>	Sweden, Switzerland	Armenia, Canada, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Italy,	Austria	
<b>Market for non-wood forest goods</b>	UK		Italy, Sweden, Ukraine	
<b>Market for wood (industrial, wood energy)</b>	Belgium, Finland, Norway, USA	Finland, USA	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Germany, Turkey, Ukraine	
<b>Pests and diseases</b>	UK	Czech Republic	Austria, UK, USA	
<b>Promotion of wood for the energy sector</b>		Finland, Netherlands, Uzbekistan	Canada, Finland, Serbia, Sweden	
<b>Recreational activities in forests</b>		Belgium, Switzerland	Georgia, Switzerland	
<b>Timber production</b>	Turkey	Austria, Bulgaria, France	Spain	
<b>Don't know</b>				
<b>Other</b>		UK	Finland	

TABLE 3: NATIONAL CHALLENGES

Analyzing the information provided in the Russian version of the survey together with the English version and disregarding the rank of the challenges, the data reveal that achieving sustainability goals is the top priority with 12% of all responses for the three greatest national challenges. Next are coordination among forest actors (11%), adaptation/vulnerability to climate change (10%), and forest financing (8%).

⇒ Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on the greatest national challenges. The comments provided were in large parts similar to the comments on the regional challenges. Climate change, adaptation in forestry and resilience of forest ecosystems were identified as major challenges. Some respondents raised the issue of financial difficulties in the forest sector. One comment explained that a major challenge is related to the profitability and the competitiveness of forestry and its contribution to sustainable rural economies. It was stated that the level of commitment by individual companies is limited by their financial situation. Payments for ecosystem services were mentioned as a further challenge. A general remark stated that the overall economic condition of the US and EU will impact the challenges. Related to the IPoW one respondent wrote that for the national context its relevance is limited and it is not used as guidance but it is nevertheless informative. As for the regional challenges no mention of gender issues was made in the comments on national challenges.

#### A.4. ADDRESSING CHALLENGES

**In general, the work of the Teams of Specialists, the Joint Working Party and COFFI/EFC is deemed important for addressing both regional and national challenges, but faces challenges in adequately addressing issues such as forest financing, forest fires and coordination among forest actors. Various suggestions on improving the relevance of the IPoW in the areas of cooperation and information exchange as well as climate change strategies were obtained.**

One of the key questions for the evaluation was to investigate how the IPoW addressed existing challenges. As in the challenges section, the survey differentiated between regional and national levels. At the regional level, respondents were asked to rate how relevant the work of COFFI/EFC, the Joint Working Party and the Teams of Specialists was to the region's efforts in tackling the challenges. As shown in Figure 6, the ToS were rated "very relevant" or "relevant" by 82% of respondents, followed by the Joint Working Party with 80% and COFFI/EFC with 71%. Only 2% rated COFFI/EFC and the ToS as "irrelevant". The Joint Working Party was not rated as irrelevant by anyone.

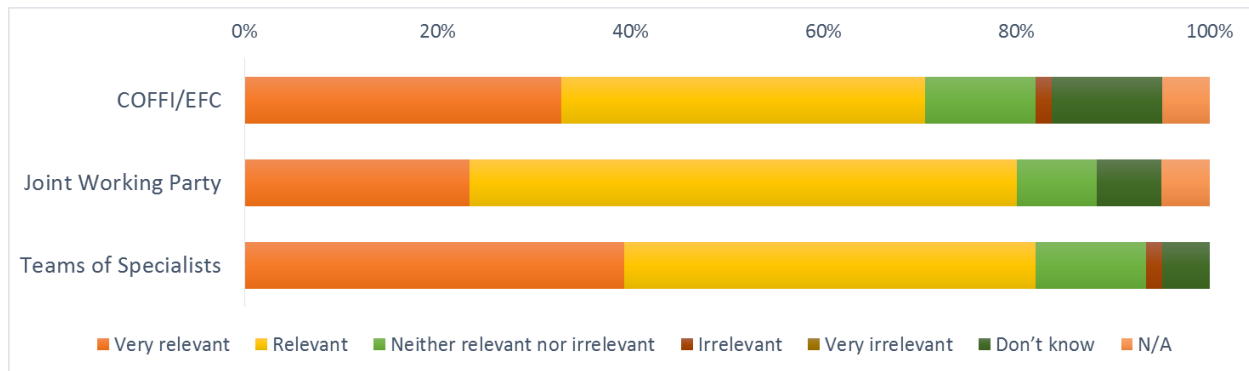


FIGURE 6: RELEVANCE OF THE WORK OF COFFI/EFC, JWP AND TOS TO THE REGION'S CHALLENGES

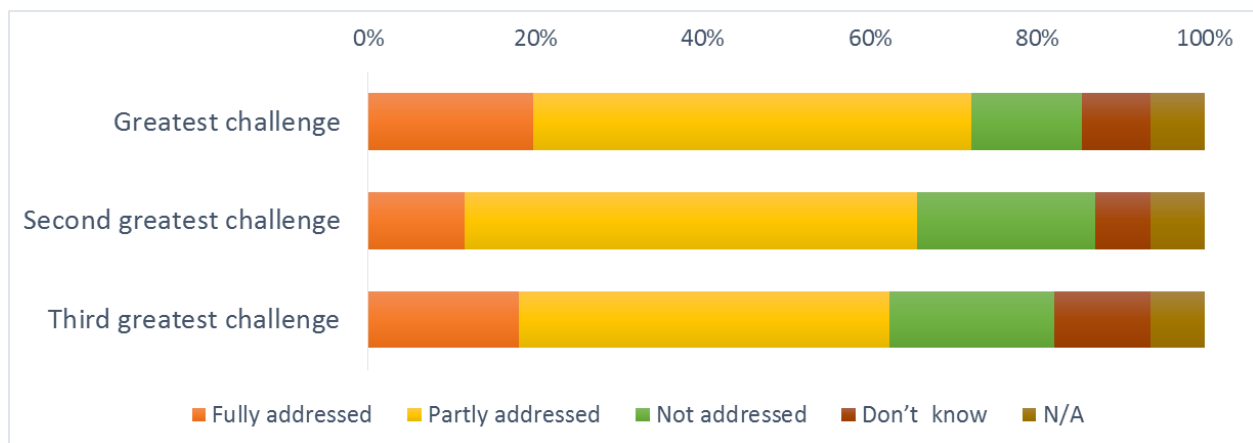
Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on the main contribution of the bodies to addressing the regional needs. Comments can roughly be grouped into strengths and challenges.

- ⇒ **Strengths.** An often mentioned strength is the exchange of information, experiences and best practices. In the comments, the provision of scientific advice, case studies, guidance and capacity building were applauded. It was stated that the joint discussion platforms for forest actors have a positive impact on almost all aspects of sustainable forest management. Moreover the creation of a common information framework for decision making building on a sound technical and scientific background was mentioned as strength. It was stated that the bodies improve the awareness of contemporary problems, help in the formation of a strategic vision for the development of the forestry sector and help setting concrete and attainable goals. In terms of policy making the transfer of data and information to upper organizations and advocacy to policy makers were mentioned as strengths. One comment stressed the bodies' efforts on the promotion of wood for climate change mitigation purposes, wood for construction, education on sustainability issues, forest certification, illegal logging issues, and renewable raw materials.
- ⇒ **Challenges.** A concerned respondent stated that the EFC/COFFI is a unique opportunity for regional level government-industry stakeholders to come together officially and the historical emphasis on wood markets and industry should not be lost. Care should be taken that the UN does not become a "talking shop" on forestry and policy. Another comment stated that direct contact between enterprises and associations is a prerequisite, but a risk is that forest sector law and policies are produced by people unaware of real challenges in the production of certain products, especially non-wood forest products. Other critical comments stated that there was low visibility of recent ToS outputs and that too few actions had been carried out. It was also mentioned that there is little awareness of the bodies' existence in some OECD countries. Several mentioned that financial resources for active participation in meetings are very limited. Some comments addressed topics that were perceived to be missing on the agenda. In particular, these were the interrelation of forest, climate change, forest financing and environmental accounting and the inexistent or not implemented strategical forestry and forest related sectors strategies. Finally, a comment suggested to ensure the connection between sustainable forest management and the "green" economy, and the question of the dignity of "green" jobs and employment in the forestry sector.



Additionally, the participants were asked to what extent the IPoW addressed their countries' needs in tackling the major challenges for the period 2014-2017. Around 72% of the respondents considered that their greatest challenge was fully or partly addressed (see Figure 7). However, many also mentioned that their first, second or third greatest challenge was not being addressed by the IPoW.

Challenges from the given list that respondents felt had not been addressed were as follows. The number in brackets indicates how often a challenge was classified as not addressed. Forest financing (5), Forest fires (5), Coordination among forest actors (4), Forest governance (e.g. illegal logging, deforestation) (3), Forest ownership (3), Achieving sustainability goals (2), Adaptation/vulnerability to climate change (2), Recreational activities in forests (2), Climate mitigation (1), Improvement of conditions for forest workers (1), Managing production and protection forests (1), Market for non-wood forest goods (1), Pests and diseases (1), Promotion of wood for the energy sector (1), Other (1).



**FIGURE 7: DEGREE TO WHICH NATIONAL CHALLENGES ARE ADDRESSED**

The Teams of Specialists are mandated to provide guidance and advice and to conduct supportive activities. The respondents were asked to indicate which of the ToS were particularly helpful in tackling their countries' national challenges.

Of the 61 respondents, 51% stated that the ToS on Sustainable Forest Products was particularly helpful. 49% thought that the ToS on Forest Products Statistics was helpful, followed by 48% on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). The percentage of respondents that mentioned the remaining ToS were as follows: ToS on Wood Energy (44%), ToS on Forest Policy (39%), ToS on the Forest Sector Outlook (34%), ToS on Forest Communication - Forest Communicators Network (26%), ToS on Green Jobs - Joint ILO/ECE/FAO Expert Network (18%). 8% stated that none of the listed ToS had been particularly helpful.

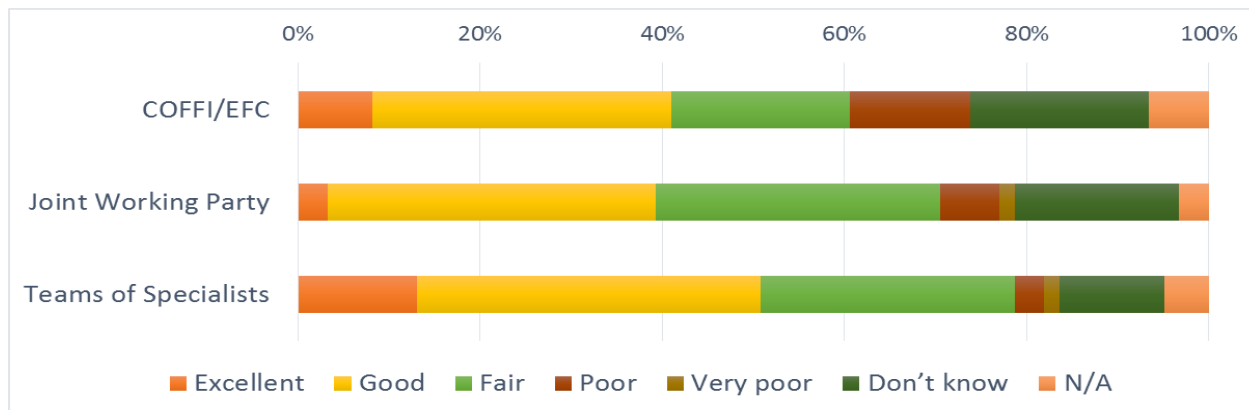
Seeking ideas on how to improve the relevance of the IPoW, respondents were asked to describe how the activities and outputs of the IPoW could better contribute to addressing national challenges. The topics cooperation and information exchange as well as climate change strategies stood out among the comments. Once more it is remarkable that gender was not mentioned in the comments.

- ⇒ **Cooperation and information exchange.** Respondents suggested to enhance communication and exchange among all actors. The use of synergies between ToS and increased interaction between ToS and industry experts was recommended. Furthermore a comment suggested to popularize problems among specialists and to assign more financial means for activities. A recommendation was to increase the collaboration on employment prospects in the green job market. Another respondent requested that the results of the Forest Sector Outlook studies should be provided more quickly. On the institutional side, a respondent suggested to engage in a closer cooperation with other relevant organizations, esp. Forest Europe and the EU. Moreover it was suggested to continue the tradition of joint sessions and to maintain the integrated program, the joint secretariat, the practice of holding joint meetings of the Bureau, joint publications and a joint specialization. A last suggestion was to harmonize national and regional forest policy, conduct bilateral and multilateral projects on key areas, and coordinate actions in the direction of the decisions on priority topics.
- ⇒ **Climate change strategies.** Respondents suggested to evaluate the long-term effects of climate change on forests and determine present and future responses and to develop a suite of readily available adaptation options. It was recommended to give high priority to strategies for coping with and adapting to forest disturbance while maintaining the genetic diversity and resilience of forest ecosystems. A further respondent suggested to discuss a framework for facilitating adaptation in forestry and to conduct a review of adaptive actions. A specific recommendation was to create a ToS on climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- ⇒ **Other.** Several comments unrelated to the two previous groups were also given. It was suggested to refocus on market and economic issues as well as on weak forest governance in Eastern Europe and to avoid having a single focus on European forest policy. A request was to use the Russian language more widely in the official work (i.e. in publications, on the website, and during events). A further comment was to improve the linkage of the national forest sector outlook studies to EFSOS. A respondent put forward the suggestion to develop strategies for increases in national forest cover and improvements in the well-being of people using forest resources. Finally, a suggestion was to reflect SFM in the IPoW, as well as to lay a focus on updating of forest policy, the role of forests in tackling the climate problem and achieving the SDGs, an evaluation of forest ecosystem services; and holding regional surveys and ad hoc events on the listed themes.

## A.5. LEVEL OF SUPPORT

**Overall respondents consider support of the ToS, COFFI/EFC and the Joint Working Party to be excellent or good. Moreover the support provided through normative products, seminars, workshops, events and policy work are highly appreciated.**

The provision of useful support is an indicator for the relevance of a program. A key question for this evaluation is thus how the IPoW supported member states in addressing their needs. In a first question on support, the respondents were asked to rate the level of support provided to their country by COFFI/EFC, the Joint Working Party, and the Teams of Specialists. Figure 8 summarizes the answers.



**FIGURE 8: RATING OF SUPPORT PROVIDED BY COFFI/EFC, JWP AND TOS**

In a follow-up question, respondents were asked to comment on how the work and output of COFFI/EFC, the Joint Working Party and the Teams of Specialists feed into national activities, i.e. how they are used at the national level. The comments are summarized below.

- ⇒ **Research and communication.** Respondents mentioned that the outputs are used for comparisons with national studies, statistics and key figures and that they serve as background information for national work on policies, technical guidance and decision making. Others mentioned that the outputs are seen as an important and comprehensive source of information for education and research projects in the forestry sector. Others use the outputs to support communication, advisory services and publications. Some respondents stated that the outputs contribute to their efforts in soft diplomacy and help clarify national positions. One respondent mentioned that there is little need for the output.
- ⇒ **Specific outputs.** A number of comments referred to specific outputs. In particular, the Forest Products Annual Market Review (FPAMR), Rovaniemi Action Plan and Outlook Studies were mentioned to be frequently used. A comment on the Rovaniemi Conference stated that it was a valuable opportunity to get updated on the forestry sector and recent market trends. The FPAMR was mentioned to be a valuable source of information in consulting work and for market position evaluation. Another respondent mentioned that contributing to the FPAMR Report is a useful exercise for various players to engage in market issues. A more skeptical comment stated that while the work of the ToS may be useful, it is not visible that the outcomes are widely promulgated.

Specific outputs on gender such as the report on 'Time for action. Changing the gender situation in forestry' (FAO 2006) were not mentioned. However, the Rovaniemi Action Plan (UNECE, FAO 2014), which contains suggestions on possible actions related to gender, was mentioned to be frequently used.

To go into more detail, the respondents were asked to provide information on how various categories of outputs (seminars / workshops, communication activities, publications, capacity building activities, policy documents, advisory missions, data and monitoring) contribute to their national needs. The answers are summarized below. For each of the categories of outputs a number of respondents stated that they do not know. These answers are omitted from the summaries below.

⇒ **Seminars / workshops:** The majority of responses were very positive. Respondents highlighted the possibility to connect, network and use the seminars and workshops as platform to discuss and exchange experiences. Several respondents stressed the learning and knowledge sharing functions, in particular to be updated on the development of issues, to find new solutions and to understand the scale of problems. Further comments were that the seminars and workshops provide good contributions and are useful. The meeting(s) on the Rovaniemi action plan was mentioned to have been excellent.

Some respondents disputed the contribution of the seminars and workshops to their national needs. Comments provided were that the contribution varies, depending on the workshop subject. Other comments were “unsatisfactory”, “sometimes”, “rather low”, “very few”, “basic” and “no”. It was also mentioned that the contribution was restricted due to limited means for foreign travel.

⇒ **Communication activities:** Positive comments on communication activities were that they allow for active exchange of information which promotes quality forest management. The information is found to be useful in providing insights and notifications and supports national communication activities at the global level. A respondent mentioned that the communication activities are useful because forestry related issues are not frequently covered in the media. Other comments provided were “Through important events and through the forest communicator network”, “Allows to be informed about various activities and concerns in different countries”, “Good on-line communication with the coordinator and the other members of teams”, “Good contribution”, “Key messages”, “Finding the right activities”, “Background information”.

More skeptical comments were that the contribution to national needs are “accomplished through meetings and conferences in the EU”, and that the communication activities are mainly addressed at European members, providing less to non-European members. Other comments were “Likely not relevant, though market communications may be useful to industry”, “Medium”, “Sometimes”, “Unsatisfactory”, “Poor” and “Low”.

⇒ **Publications:** The comments provided on publications were largely positive, with many remarks such as “excellent”, “very important”, “very useful” “important”, “very good” and “generally useful”. Several mentioned that the reports are frequently used as reference and important sources of background information. A respondent stressed the contribution in terms of information exchange, although it is limited to SMEs specifically interested in ECE conditions and activities. Another comment was that some publications have been useful to forest sector analysts, so that they can better understand pan-ECE issues and thereby make better policy decisions and set forest science research priorities.

One comment was that “informing the public is a good tool for sustainable forest management”. A further remark on the contribution to national needs was on the “link between silviculture techniques and effect on the provision of environmental service, especially non-wood forest

products and water related service". Some comments explicitly referred to certain publications, such as a comment saying that the Rovaniemi Action Plan is very helpful. Also EFSOS publications were mentioned as being useful. Moreover, the regular publication of the Forest Products Annual Market Review was rated as very useful.

The more critical comments were very brief – "Poor", "Satisfactory" and "Low". Concern was also expressed by one respondent that the publications do not contribute to national needs because "politicians do not care".

- ⇒ **Capacity building activities:** Several brief positive comments such as "very important", "useful" and "good" were given. A more detailed comment stressed that the activities contributed by improving professional skills and human capabilities, as well as technical conditions and permanent learning process. Moreover, field trips, trainings, study tours and demo projects were mentioned. Field trips were specifically mentioned to be of high educational importance in developing local communities' knowledge on green economy issues. One respondent suggested that capacity building activities would be very useful for introducing new methods and improving statistics, particularly in those countries that are less active in international forestry. A further respondent stated that there is little direct impact, but that the activities act indirectly through cooperation in creating institutions for the forest and wood sector. The negative statements were short and largely lacked explanations ("Unsatisfactory", "No", "Very low", "Not so relevant to my country", "Poor").

Unfortunately no information was provided on whether capacity building activities reach out to men and women in the same way.

- ⇒ **Policy documents:** Comparatively few comments were provided on the policy documents. Next to several short statements including "Good", "Useful" and "Excellent", one respondent mentioned that the policy documents had had an important role in setting the agenda and the priorities in the national debate. Another stated that the documents were used in analytical, educational and academic work and for the formation of forest policy. A third mentioned that the availability of documents on European forestry policy, research results for forecasts of wood market development, and documents on pricing of wood products had contributed to the national needs. A number of comments such as "No", "Rather low", "Not used to any extent" and "Basic" were provided, but no further explanations were given.
- ⇒ **Advisory missions:** The comments provided on the contribution of the advisory missions to national needs were fairly short. Apart from "Useful" and "Good" there was one statement saying that advisory missions are important to assist sustainable forest management. One comment referred to positive feedback received from international experts in a national reform process. No explanations were given for the short negative comments (including "Not relevant", "Not at all", "Low").
- ⇒ **Data and monitoring:** Only positive comments were provided on the data and monitoring outputs. Short comments were *inter alia* "Very useful", "Very important", "Important", "Excellent contribution" and "colleagues use data". Statements provided by respondents can be categorized into two groups: data users and data collection and standardization. One respondent mentioned that the data outputs are "one of the main sources for most of the studies in forestry related

challenges”. Moreover the data was said to play a role as background information for national and international reporting. One comment considered it as an important source of information. Another country listed the users of the data and monitoring outputs: the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Economic Development, Forestry and Wood Technology faculties, regional statistical offices, universities and researchers. A further comment stated that the outputs are relevant to SMEs and they help them consolidate their international reporting activities. One additional comment referred to the usefulness of data and monitoring for the development and implementation of national C&I for SFM and other development purposes.

Concerning data quality, a respondent made the following statement “UNECE efforts to standardize reporting are of great help to our own forest statistics gathering bodies. This includes updating the Harmonized System in recommendations to the World Customs Organization.” Another respondent put forward the benefit of common definitions, quality of data, comparisons and upcoming new indicators. One comment addressed the need for data coordination, stressing that “you cannot design any policy if you do not know what you have in your hands. We need to realize what we have, to account for what we need”. Finally, a respondent stated that contributing to the Forest Resources Assessment is perceived as very important in the respondent’s country.

## A.6. UPCOMING CHALLENGES AND FUTURE NEEDS

**The challenges and needs in the current IPoW are still valid but need to be updated for the next period (2018-2021). Comments on upcoming challenges and needs can be summarized into the areas of climate change and forest disturbances, forest resources and biomass, green economy and sustainability, products and others. Especially the topics of climate change and forest disturbances appear to have gained in importance.**

The final part of the survey dealt with future challenges and needs and corresponding suggestions on issues to integrate into the next period of the IPOW (2018-2021).

When asked to what extent the challenges and needs identified in the current Programme of Work are still valid in the region, 52% of the 61 respondents stated that they are “still valid but need to be updated”. For 34% of the respondents the current challenges and needs are “still valid”, while 7% stated they are “valid to a limited extent” and 2% said they are “no longer valid”. 5% of the respondents answered that they do not know.

Space was provided for respondents to write comments on, or explanations for, their answer. In the summary below, the comments were roughly grouped into the groups climate change, institutional issues, other challenges and needs. As previously, gender was not addressed in the comments.

⇒ **Climate change.** One comment stated that there is need to operationalize commitments on the green economy and climate change mitigation and adaptation. Forest fires caused largely by climate change were mentioned as challenge that remains to be valid in the region. Another



comment was that the carbon sequestration of wood needs to be recognized. A further comment was that there is a constant threat from production in low-cost regions and climate change.

- ⇒ **Institutional issues.** A comment on the ToS was that there is room for improvement in the management and operationalization of ToS. Another comment stated that the basic structure and objectives are still very relevant for the future but the number of ToS and their interrelation and clustering would need to be considered. One comment suggested to increase the advocacy for policy makers in the key topics. It was also criticized that there is no significant effort to involve experts in the regions. Another comment stated that the IPoW is a good framework for discussion and communication, but that it receives little to no national attention in the respondent's country. A comment was that discussions should refocus on market and economic issues. Care should be taken to not lose Canada and the USA as attendees of the meetings given that their interest is on transatlantic economic issues and not on specifics of a Europe-centered forest policy debate. Finally, one comment was on the working climate between institutions, stating that it is very bad and that there is a lack of respect of respective mandates in particular in the framework of the collaboration between UNECE and FAO. It was mentioned that without a fair and constructive solution to this concern, all the efforts would have to be spent on institutional matters.
- ⇒ **Other challenges and needs.** Several additional comments were submitted that do not fall into the two groups above. One was that the concept of payments for ecosystem services should be included in WA2 (Advice/Guidance on implementation of payment for ecosystem services). Another comment referred to new forest product markets, stating that markets are promising, e.g. for cross-laminated timber and nanotechnology, and further stating that wood cellulose has the potential to be widely used. Other topics that were mentioned to remain valid in the region were illegal logging and FSC, sustainable building, and land fragmentation.

In a last question, respondents were asked to comment, from their country's perspective, which new regional challenges and national needs are relevant to the next period of the IPoW (2018-2021). Numerous answers and statements were made, that are summarized by topic below.

- ⇒ **Climate change and forest disturbances.** It was stated that the new IPoW should reflect the international work on SDGs and climate (Paris Climate Agreement). The role of land use, land use change and forestry in climate action, especially in the light of the Paris Agreement and from the angle of countries with high forest cover was highlighted. Several comments suggested developing strategies on how to more effectively adapt to climate change (including altered risks of wildfires, pest epidemics, invasive species, exotic pest invasion and spread, sea level rise-caused ecosystem disruptions, shifting species ranges, changing availability of water, etc.). It was also suggested to promote the role of managed forests in mitigation and as renewable raw material (incl. biofuel). Another comment put forward the need to focus on forest disturbances and risk mitigation and an overall integration of the expertise and knowledge to increase the natural capital value. Further comments addressed forest fires and the need to identify effective ways, including pan-ECE actions, to reduce the risks and minimize the impacts of the spread of invasive species attacking forests.
- ⇒ **Forest resources and biomass.** One comment stated that there is need to shift priorities in the forest industry from pulp and paper to wood energy. A different comment mentioned that trade and sustainability particularly in relation to wood energy is an issue relevant to the next period

of the IPoW. Another comment identified the need to promote forest biomass and forest restoration including forest farming. Another comment identified the need for large scale forest management plans that consider the production enhancement of non-wood forest products and other forest related products and services. Further topics that were mentioned were uneven-aged forest management, developing the green sector job market, improving mobility, and developing well recognized certification practices.

- ⇒ **Green economy and sustainability.** Needs identified in this area were the development of forest and forest based products and service markets, the transformation towards a green economy / bioeconomy and the need to stimulate innovation and investments. One comment said that the 'big picture' needs to be developed, i.e. it needs to be discussed what the outlook for the forest sector is and how it is related to other sectors. Furthermore, a respondent mentioned the need to contribute to global UN development processes, IAF, and climate and sustainable development. It was said that the IPoW should better reflect the GOF, SDGs and correspond to any future UN Strategic Plan on Forests. It was suggested to strengthen capacity building and experience exchange components, in particular in the area of bioeconomy. Finally it was stated that there is need to develop concepts for efficient and effective management of forest resources (integration of all ecosystem services); as well as a need to play a role and cooperate at the global level (strengthen and exchange and promote sustainability concepts and activities in the forest sector across continents).
- ⇒ **Products.** A number of comments put forward the need to address specific products, such as timber products, non-wood products, and competitive substitutes for wood. A wood raw material deficit was identified as challenge for the next period of the IPoW. Moreover, a suggestion was to lay a focus on research and outreach on new wood products and guidance on implementation of LCA for wood and wood products.
- ⇒ **Other needs and challenges.** Several other topics were mentioned, including suggestions on promoting the exchange of experiences, forest finance and developing new markets in non-wood forest products. It was put forward that the role of forests in providing services to society needs to be supported with better evidence (e.g. woodlands in tackling flooding). Other topics were the competitiveness of the forest industry vs. forest services, such as recreation or enhanced conservation of critical habitat for endangered species.



## B. INTERVIEW FINDINGS

The telephone interviews were structured around three key topics (1.) the relevance of normative products, (2.) the relevance of meetings, workshops and events and (3.) the relevance of technical and policy work of UNECE/COFFI. Key findings from the online survey were laid out in the interviews and respondents were asked to comment or add to the findings.

### B.1. RELEVANCE OF NORMATIVE PRODUCTS

**Particularly appreciated are the normative products dealing with forest statistics and the Forest Product Annual Market Review. Moreover the normative products on green economy are appreciated as well, but require some help to translate the theoretical basis into practice.**

The online survey found that the normative products are highly appreciated by all parties, from OECD countries, countries in transition, officials and other stakeholders. The survey data revealed that more than 70% of the respondents to the online survey agree to the statement that the IPoW provides the best available information. The interviews confirmed that there is widespread high trust in data collection methods, data processing and the compilation of summary documents. The normative products dealing with forest products statistics are particularly appreciated by all parties. Special mention should be given to the Forest Products Annual Market Reviews, which provide general and statistical information on the forest products markets in the UNECE Region. The FPAMR reports are widely appreciated because the topics dealt with are considered as highly relevant and because of the regularity of the publication. In the interviews, the various normative products dealing with the concept of green economy were likewise stated to be appreciated as well-developed, innovative and relevant tools to promote the forest and forest industry sector's roles in the transition to a green economy. This is important because green economy was one of the key aspects in the assessment of future needs and challenges in the online survey. Nevertheless, there is still an important work to do to translate the theoretical basis (as developed in the normative work) into practice and to internalize the concept into sector policies in UNECE countries.

The developments around the last Ministerial Meeting and the publication of the latest State of Europe's Forests report (Madrid 2015) were also mentioned in the interviews. For the first time, only FAO and EFI were co-publishers, but not UNECE. This affected the coverage of the report because the major forest country of Europe, Russia, in consequence did not participate in the report and for the first time the report was not published in Russian. It was suggested that the institutions should reconsider their overall approach on dealing with forest reporting in the UNECE region, because it is hardly understandable that for copyright reasons, covering the main forest country of the world is put at stake.

## B.2. RELEVANCE OF SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS AND OTHER EVENTS

**The meetings and exchange events were assessed as very important and are very much appreciated, however for the future discussions should refocus on the entire pan-ECE region and less alone on Europe. The travel funding issue needs renewed attention at both national and international levels.**

Referring to seminars, workshops and events, the main question is whether regular exchange meetings are relevant for the member countries and if such meetings help advance a common agenda. Both the online survey and the interviews revealed, that meetings of the UNECE/FAO joint committee were assessed as very important to maintain an active dialog, for networking, and for the exchange of experiences on main issues of common interest. Moreover, possibilities for exchange with a variety of stakeholders, including the private sector on economic issues in forests and the forest products value chain are appreciated. In the interviews it was mentioned that the joint meetings of the UNECE/FAO committee and commission are perceived as traditional exchange and are unique opportunities to combine strengths of both bodies, on the one side UNECE policy expertise and experience from the ECE Region and on the other side FAO's technical expertise.

In this context it is also important to mention the joint organization of the International Day of Forests on March 21<sup>st</sup> each year at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. It is an important event to attract the attention of diplomats working in wider development fields towards forests.

In the online survey a number of comments from stakeholders from non-OECD countries, especially from Central Asia, referred to the difficulty for delegates to attend meetings in Geneva and meetings at the regional level due to insufficient funding. This finding was also confirmed in the interviews. The travel funding issue, which was already mentioned in the prior evaluation, needs renewed attention, at both national and international levels. Alternative measures, including an increased use of virtual meetings, but also regular, ear-marked budgeting at national level and UNECE/FAO level might need to be further explored.

In the interviews and to some extent in the online survey, a number of countries outside Western Europe questioned the relevance of some of the major discussion items of the meetings over the past two years. An issue of concern was that some discussions, formally and informally, focused on European internal issues (e.g. the discussion on the LBA for Europe), which is of lesser interest to countries outside the region. Due to this focus on Western Europe, time and resources were said to be lost for work that is of more relevance to countries in the entire pan-ECE region. Moreover, the time and consideration given to the Rovaniemi Action Plan, with a clear focus on Europe, may have distracted attention from other issues of broader interest to the wider UNECE region. It was mentioned that a more balanced, pan-ECE region approach with less focus on Western Europe alone would be favorable.

### B.3. RELEVANCE OF THE TECHNICAL AND POLICY WORK OF UNECE/COFFI

**Knowledge exchange and policy work in the UNECE/FAO joint program is strengthened through the technical work of the Teams of Specialists, but agendas and reports from meetings of ToS are not easily traceable at the webpage of UNECE. Currently the collaboration between UNECE/COFFI and the FAO Regional Commission is assessed as challenged and requires improvement.**

The online survey revealed that more than 80% of the respondents found that the work of the Joint Working Party is relevant to the region's efforts in tackling existing challenges. Equivalently, 83% found that the work of the ToS is relevant to the region's efforts in tackling existing challenges. Teams of Specialists are intended to support the implementation of the Integrated Programme of Work 2014-2017. The online survey revealed that the level of support provided to countries by the ToS was rated excellent or good by 51% of the respondents. In the interviews it was mentioned that through the ToS, the technical work is strengthened and the meetings provide room for discussion of issues on an expert basis. This allows for balanced reporting from working parties and constitutes a good basis for knowledge exchange and policy work in the UNECE/FAO joint program. However, agendas and reports from meetings of ToS are not easily traceable at the webpage of UNECE.

Areas that were emphasized as being of importance to deal with through the ToS were the work on production and trade statistics, the work on broader policy and economic issues and the work on governance and institutional questions. The request was raised to create a new Team of Specialists for the topic of climate change, adaptation and mitigation, since stakeholders would be interested in more information and an exchange of experiences and best practices across the UNECE Region.

In the interviews, respondents from several countries in Europe mentioned that, at times, the collaboration between UNECE/COFFI and the FAO Regional Commission is challenged and that there is room for improvement in spreading knowledge on the role and work of the FAO Budapest office in complementing capacity building in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. There is a pronounced need for capacity building in technical work, institutional building and generally issues relating to governance and also illegal logging. The online survey further revealed a need for capacity building in the area of the green economy. Although not explicitly declared in the interviews, one way of supporting capacity building in the green economy could be stronger female participation in forestry (UNECE, FAO 2015a, 2015c, 2014). A follow-up of the St. Petersburg Declaration<sup>1</sup> to be dealt with in UNECE was mentioned as an issue of common interest for those countries that have difficulties to keep momentum for new developments in the forest sector.

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<sup>1</sup> See copy of declaration and follow-up work under <http://www.enpi-fleg.org/about/st-petersburg-declaration/>

## CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions are organized in the order of the questions in the evaluation matrix (Table 1) and draw on findings from the online survey and the interviews.

### **I Regional challenges at the time the IPoW 2014-2017 was elaborated**

Previous regional challenges were assessed through a review of UNECE documents. Challenges were identified in the areas of production, markets and forest governance, biodiversity conservation, climate change and forest disturbances. Some challenges were specific for certain subregions, e.g. a decrease in demand for paper, paperboard and pulpwood in the ECE West and forest governance in the ECE East and Northern and Central Asia. However, biodiversity conservation and in particular eutrophication of soils was an issue across the ECE region.

### **II Regional and national challenges today (as of May 2016)**

The six most frequently mentioned key challenges at the regional level are “achieving sustainability goals”, “adaptation/vulnerability to climate change”, “climate mitigation”, “coordination among forest actors”, “forest governance (e.g. illegal logging, deforestation)”, and “developing new markets for wood”. Respondents explained that climate change and related changing disturbance regimes (e.g. fires, pests) have created need for new adaptation strategies. Other comments revealed that achieving sustainability goals in relation to the SGDs is perceived as a challenge. Related to the bioeconomy forest finance together with profitable forest management and the forest sector’s role in a transition to a green economy were mentioned as challenges.

At the national level, fairly similar challenges were mentioned. The four most frequently mentioned challenges were achieving sustainability goals, coordination among forest actors, adaptation/vulnerability to climate change, and forest financing.

### **III Addressing challenges**

In order to find out how the IPoW addressed existing challenges, respondents were asked to rate the relevance of the work of the COFFI/EFC, Joint Working Party and ToS to the region’s efforts in tackling the challenges. Overall, the bodies were rated as relevant by the vast majority of respondents. Only very few stated that the work was irrelevant. Comments revealed that information exchange, the provision of advice and capacity building were seen as major advantages in addressing challenges. However, there was also concern that the historical focus on wood markets and the industry should not be lost. No comment was made about gender equality in previous, current or future challenges.

More than 70% of the respondents felt that their greatest national challenge was either partly or fully addressed by the IPoW. Among the challenges that several respondents felt were not being adequately addresses were forest financing, forest fires and coordination among forest actors. Among the groups of ToS the following stood out as particularly helpful in tackling national challenges: the ToS on Sustainable Forest Products, the ToS on Forest Products Statistics and the ToS on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). Several comments were made on cooperation and information exchange, e.g. to increase synergies between ToS and on strategies

related to climate change, such as to develop a suite of readily available adaptation options. It was also suggested to create a ToS on climate change issues.

#### **IV Provision of support**

Respondents were asked to rate the level of support provided to their country by the three bodies. Around 40% stated that COFFI/EFC and the Joint Working Party provide excellent or good support. Likewise about half of the respondents rated the ToS as excellent or good. As laid out in the section on the interviews, support provided through normative products, seminars, workshops, events and policy work is highly appreciated.

#### **V Validity of the needs identified during the 2011-2012 Strategic Review in the region**

The vast majority (93%) of respondents expects that the current challenges at the regional level will remain unchanged during the period 2018-2021. In the interviews it was asked whether respondents expect any impact due to major issues such as migration that are currently on the top of the political agenda in many countries. None of the respondents could make out any direct relationship to forestry questions.

#### **VI Upcoming challenges and needs**

Various comments were provided on upcoming challenges and needs. They can be summarized into the areas of climate change and forest disturbances, forest resources and biomass, green economy and sustainability, products and other needs and challenges. Recalling that the key areas of concern identified in the literature were production, markets and forest governance, biodiversity conservation, climate change and forest disturbances, it becomes clear, that the online survey did not reveal any fundamentally new challenges. However, the topics of climate change and forest disturbances appear to have gained in importance. These topics were covered in the literature but did not play a prominent role. By contrast, they were frequently mentioned in the answers and comments submitted in the online survey. This may be indicative of a shift of importance of these issues.

While the top priorities may shift along with external factors and market forces, it is difficult to identify areas of the current IPoW that are likely to decrease in importance in the next years.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**1. Maintain focus on value chain from forests to forest products/timber and markets.**  
(Findings A.1.-6., B.3.; Conclusions II,III, VI)

The primary recommendation is to continue laying the focus on the value chain from forests to forest products/timber and markets, which is seen as one of the most important comparative advantages of UNECE/FAO's common work. For some countries, particular attention should remain on economic questions in regard to forest management (forest accounting; valuation of forest goods and services; digitalization) and in marketing forest products and, where requested on governance and institutional issues. Clearly, one of the strengths of the UNECE/FAO is in data collection, interpretation and dissemination of information about SFM, economic policies, forest industry and trade. This comparative advantage and unique proposition should be fully maintained.

**2. Continue using meetings for knowledge brokering and experience exchange**  
(Findings A.1.-6., B.2.-3.; Conclusions III)

The regular joint meetings are recommended to be used for knowledge brokering and experience exchange and broader coordination of policy efforts, particularly in the European context between UNECE- FAO, the RFC for Europe and Central Asia and Forest Europe. It is also essential to maintain a good working relationship between the UNECE/FAO Joint Work Programme and the work of the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, which has a technical mandate to develop capacities and institutional strengthening particularly for countries in need of such cooperation, in Eastern, Southern and South-Eastern Europe, and Central Asia.

**3. Use joint meetings to convene with stakeholders from the entire northern forest belt**  
(Findings A.1.-2., A.5.-6., B.2.)

A further recommendation is to use the joint meetings as an occasion to convene with relevant stakeholders from the entire northern forest belt (North America, Europe, Russia including Siberia and Central Asia). In this regard, it should be recalled that the countries of this belt comprise the entirety of boreal forests and a considerable part of temperate forests of the world, more than 40% of the global forest area. The unique opportunity should be used to feed into the larger policy dialogues on SFM, forest and climate change, gender issues and sector governance (both global/UNFF and regional North America/Forest Europe).

**4. Foster sectoral themes that do not receive sufficient attention in other fora**  
(Findings B.2.-3.; Conclusions III)

While the overall work program 2014-17 is generally assessed as relevant, including a clear ranking of topics to take into consideration, one of the strengths widely recognized since many years is the ability to foster sectoral themes that did not receive sufficient attention in other international fora. Topics of importance for a forthcoming common work program include *inter alia* focusing the work on specific areas of the green economy, such as (i) more in-depth economic analysis and review pilot implementations on the generation and effective use of forest and wood biomass for low carbon development and future energy needs; (ii) resilience of temperate and boreal forests and tree species to climate change and economic implication; (iii) and, as proposed by some countries,

comprehensive work on wood construction and substitution of other material through wood products in the building sector.

**5. Use the Rovaniemi Action Plan as basis for institutional development in Eastern Europe and Central Asia**

(Findings A.5., B.2.)

Concerning the Rovaniemi Action Plan, many applauded the very participatory process that included the timber industry and NGOs. However, implementation is proving to be difficult at the national level in some countries. A suggestion is to use the Rovaniemi Action Plan as a basis for economic work and institutional development in the forest sector in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, e.g. through work of the regional commission of FAO.

**6. Coordinate actions with work for other international agreements**

(Findings A.1., A.6., B.3.)

In the immediate future, broader developmental concepts, including the implementation of the SDGs and the translation of the Paris Climate Agreement into concrete actions in the forest and related sectors will influence the work of the UNECE/FAO from different angles. This will include providing relevant information for monitoring and creating capacities for wider SFM approaches in countries with the need to build capacities. Moreover, UNECE/FAO could develop and provide relevant forest data collection and working approaches to support SDG implementation in the member countries.

Certainly a way to strengthen a capacity would be to mainstream gender into the forest policies, to ensure participation and leadership of women in the forest sector, as for example is recommended in the output document of the ToS on gender and forestry (FAO 2006) and in some more recent publications (UNECE, FAO 2015a, 2015c). One step forward in this direction can be development of national gender strategies for the forest sector and by enhancing cooperation and integration of women in forestry (UNECE, FAO 2015b). It will also require developing relevant actions to sharpen the role of forests and forest products across countries' economic sectors. UNECE/COFFI, in this respect could be inspired by work in the broader environmental sector of the UN and FAO. The Aichi Targets are an important case in point.

**7. Reflect on private sector integration into the work of UNECE/FAO**

(Findings A.4.-5., B.2.)

A recommendation is also to reflect on how private sector actors can be better included in the work of UNECE/FAO, in particular in economic issues, including national accounting, legality issues and chain-of-custody and transatlantic trade issues (e.g. through a strengthening of the teams of specialists and special working sessions in the Geneva meetings).

Last but not least, it is recommended to dedicate special attention to the 70th anniversary of the UNECE/FAO collaboration next year.

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## ANNEX 1: WORK AREAS OF THE IPoW 2014-2017

The activities planned in the four work areas, their expected outputs and underlying assumptions. Note: The content in the tables is either quoted directly from the IPoW or summarized to meet space limitations of the table.

Activities and indicators			
Work Area 1 Data, monitoring and assessment		Outputs	Assumptions and Risks
Activity 1	The data collection and reporting system of the joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section consists of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection, validation and dissemination of statistics on forest resources, products, functions and services, sustainable forest management, forest policies, institutions and instruments, and the contribution of the forest sector to a green economy;</li> <li>• Analysis and assessment of the state of forests, sustainability of forest management and forest products markets; and monitoring the role of the forest sector in a green economy;</li> <li>• Cooperation and support to international processes in sustainable forest management, including the development and use of regional Criteria and Indicators and the preparation of the report on the State of Europe's Forests.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Forest Products Annual Market Reviews;</li> <li>– the State of Europe's Forests in cooperation with Forest Europe;</li> <li>– the regional input to the FAO Global Forest Resource Assessment;</li> <li>– Joint Wood Energy Enquiries;</li> <li>– associated databases;</li> <li>– studies on forest ownership, occupation and employment,</li> <li>– the contribution of the forest sector to a green economy;</li> <li>– and ad hoc sectorial studies on topics such as the profitability and competitiveness of the forest sector and other emerging issues.</li> </ul>	Data are collected in partnership with countries, international organizations and the scientific community, based on agreed standards and rules. Activities under WA1 are also expected to improve the quality of information, ensuring international compatibility, storage, dissemination and analysis of the information, and helping countries to strengthen their capacity in this area (see WA 4 on capacity-building).
Activity 2	The joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section monitors and analyses developments in different forest-related areas and also has extensive cooperation with other organizations in this area. This includes the gathering of comprehensive statistics and data (quantitative and qualitative), and developing methodologies for data collection, analysis and assessments on: <p>Forest product markets and services in the region;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All aspects of forests and forest resources, their functions and services, and sustainable forest management;</li> <li>• Long-term supply of and demand for wood and other forest goods and services;</li> <li>• Use of wood energy and its implications for sustainable forest management.</li> </ul>		

TABLE 4: WORK AREA 1

Work Area 2 Policy dialogue and advice		Outputs	Assumptions and Risks
Activity 3	This includes contributions of the joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section to the global (mainly United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO)), regional (in particular CIS Intergovernmental Council on Forestry and Forest Industry, Eurasian Economic Commission, European Commission, European Forest Institute, Forest Europe) and national forest dialogues and cross-sectoral cooperation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– guidelines and recommendations in accordance with the Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy,</li> <li>– national forest policy dialogues and other policy dialogues</li> <li>– workshops for the ECE region</li> <li>– next round of Forest Sector Outlook Studies</li> <li>– policy-related parts of relevant ECE and FAO studies such as reports on the status and trends in forests and sustainable forest management,</li> <li>– relevant reviews.</li> </ul>	
Activity 4	<p>This component also involves the organization of policy dialogues and specific studies in the ECE region, and at the national level on request from member countries. Subjects to be covered will, depending on availability of funds, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forest policies, institutions and instruments;</li> <li>• Regional and national coordination of forest and forest-related policies;</li> <li>• Governance and policy making;</li> <li>• Green economy and green jobs;</li> <li>• Interaction with stakeholders and the private sector;</li> <li>• Financing for, and investment in, the profitability and competitiveness of the forest sector;</li> <li>• Structural developments in the forest sector and their policy impact and implications;</li> <li>• Wood energy and its implications for renewable energy policies and land use;</li> <li>• Role of biodiversity and wildlife in sustainable forest management;</li> <li>• Adaptation of forests and the forest sector to climate change.</li> </ul>		

TABLE 5: WORK AREA 2

Work Area 3 Communication and outreach		Outputs	Assumptions and Risks
Activity 5	<p>Improve the ability of the forest and forest products sector to communicate effectively, within and outside the sector to promote sustainable forest management. Enhance the efforts of the Committee and the Commission to reach out to relevant constituencies and to increase the dissemination of the information and tools produced, at the national, regional and global levels</p> <p>This programme area also addresses communications and outreach components of priority activities identified in the Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy and attributed to the joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section for the period 2014-2017.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing a platform for international interaction and cooperation in forest related communication;</li> <li>• Events and campaigns in support of sustainable forest management and forest products and services (e.g. the International Day of Forests, the European Forest Week, the Forest Information Week);</li> <li>• Dissemination of information produced under the Integrated Programme of Work via policy briefs, press briefs and ad hoc studies, whenever results are available and new information released;</li> <li>• Improved website maintenance and design including the use of social media/networks and videos;</li> <li>• Contribution to the organization of relevant events in member countries and dissemination of their announcements (e.g. National Forest Policy Dialogues, capacity building workshops, special public relations events) in cooperation with all stakeholders;</li> <li>• Outreach activities beyond the forest sector for disseminating information that highlights the relevance of forests and forest products and services to other sectors (e.g. energy events, biodiversity and environment meetings, sustainable construction and building).</li> </ul>	

TABLE 6: WORK AREA 3

Work Area 4 Capacity-building		Outputs	Assumptions and Risks
Activity 6	While all countries benefit from international cooperation through the Integrated Programme of Work, special attention is paid to countries in Eastern Europe, Southeast Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. This work focus on capacity-building to encourage sustainable forest management, data collection, monitoring and analysis as well as promoting the engagement of national experts from the region in international activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forest policies development, governance and institutions</li> <li>• National systems for forest monitoring and statistical reporting;</li> <li>• Forest products markets and forest resources;</li> <li>• Forest related communication;</li> <li>• Wood energy, including the collection of wood energy data;</li> <li>• The contribution of the forest sector to a green economy.</li> </ul>	<p>This work area relies mainly on extrabudgetary support. This area also addresses capacity-building components of priority activities identified in the Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy and attributed to the joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section for the period 2014-2017.</p> <p>This work area also benefits from the implementation of the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project on “Sustainable Forest Management for Greener Economies in the Caucasus and Central Asia (2013-2015)”. Additional sources of funding for capacity building will be sought with the European Union, and development banks and national development agencies.</p>

TABLE 7: WORK AREA 4

## ANNEX 2: ONLINE SURVEY

### Background

Thank you for taking time to respond to this survey. Your response is an important input for the assessment of the relevance of the 2014-2017 UNECE/FAO Integrated Programme of Work to the needs of the member States and challenges in the forest sector.

Please note that your data will not be saved until you complete the survey and click the submit button

The survey will be open until May 13th 2016

The evaluation is being conducted by the Bern University of Applied Sciences, School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences (HAFL). Individual answers will be treated confidentially, i.e. will only be visible for the evaluator at HAFL. If you have any questions or need more information about this questionnaire please contact us at [juergen.blaser@bfh.ch](mailto:juergen.blaser@bfh.ch)

### Affiliation

Q1. First name:

Q2. Last name:

Q3. I am

	COFFI/EFC delegate
	National mission to UN in Geneva staff
	JWP delegate
	ToS member
	Other stakeholder (private sector, academia, ngo etc.)
	Occasional participant
	Other

Q4. Email:

Q5. Affiliation:

Q6. Country:

### Regional level

Q7. For the period 2014-2017, which of the following fields (listed in alphabetical order) do you experience as being the greatest challenges for the region? Please rank the 3 greatest challenges.

	Greatest Challenge	Second greatest Challenge	Third greatest Challenge
Achieving sustainability goals			
Adaptation/vulnerability to climate change			
Biodiversity conservation			
Climate mitigation			
Coordination among forest actors			
Developing new markets for wood			
Forest land consolidation			
Forest financing			

Forest fires			
Forest governance (e.g. illegal logging, deforestation)			
Forest ownership			
Improvement of conditions for forest workers			
Managing production and protection forests			
Market for non-wood forest goods			
Market for wood (industrial, wood energy)			
Pests and diseases			
Promotion of wood for the energy sector			
Recreational activities in forests			
Timber production			
Don't know			

Q8. Optional comments:

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Q9. Do you expect these to remain the most important challenges for the region 2018-2021?

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

Q10. If no, which challenges do you expect will gain importance?

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Q11. To what extent was the work of the following bodies relevant to the region's efforts in tackling the challenges?

	Very relevant	Relevant	Neither relevant not irrelevant	Irrelevant	Very irrelevant	Don't know
COFFI/EFC						
Joint Working Party						
Teams of Specialists						

Q12. In your opinion, what is the main contribution of the bodies above to addressing the regional needs?

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National level

Q13. For the period 2014-2017, which of the following fields (listed in alphabetical order) do you experience as being the greatest challenges for your country? Please rank the 3 greatest challenges.

	Greatest	Second greatest	Third greatest
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	Challenge	Challenge	Challenge
Achieving sustainability goals			
Adaptation/vulnerability to climate change			
Biodiversity conservation			
Climate mitigation			
Coordination among forest actors			
Developing new markets for wood			
Forest land consolidation			
Forest financing			
Forest fires			
Forest governance (e.g. illegal logging, deforestation)			
Forest ownership			
Improvement of conditions for forest workers			
Managing production and protection forests			
Market for non-wood forest goods			
Market for wood (industrial, wood energy)			
Pests and diseases			
Promotion of wood for the energy sector			
Recreational activities in forests			
Timber production			
Don't know			

Q14. To what extent did the IPoW address your country's needs in tackling the three greatest challenges you previously mentioned for the period 2014-2017?

	Fully addressed	Partly addressed	Not addressed	Don't know
Greatest challenge				
Second greatest challenge				
Third greatest challenge				

Q15. Optional comments:

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Q16. Which of the following Teams of Specialists was particularly important in helping tackle your country's challenges?

	ToS on Sustainable Forest Products
	ToS on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)
	ToS on Forest Policy
	ToS on the Forest Sector Outlook
	ToS on Forest Communication - Forest Communicators Network
	ToS on Green Jobs - Joint ILO/ECE/FAO Expert Network
	ToS on Wood Energy



	ToS on Forest Products Statistics
	None of the above

Q17. Please describe how the activities and outputs of the IPoW could better contribute to addressing your country's challenges.

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Q18. How would you rate the level of support provided by the following bodies to your country?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor	Don't know
COFFI/EFC						
Joint Working Party						
Teams of Specialists						

Q19. At the national level, how did you use the work and output of the bodies above? For instance: Forest Products Annual Market Review, Rovaniemi Action Plan, monitoring services, assessment work, outlook studies, communication, capacity building workshops, advisory services, etc.

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Q20. Please comment on how the following categories of outputs and activities contributed to your country's needs.

Seminars / workshops	
Communication activities	
Publications	
Capacity building activities	
Policy documents	
Advisory missions	
Data and monitoring	

Q21. Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.

The IPoW...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
provides a platform for dialogue						
provides a framework to address challenges in the region.						
provides the best available information.						
facilitates policy dialogues at the national level.						
facilitates communication.						
builds capacity.						
creates impulses for new national strategies.						

helps foster national stakeholder engagement.						
provides policy tools that can be readily adopted.						

Q22. To what extent are the challenges and needs identified in the current Programme of Work still valid in the region?

	Still valid
	Still valid but need to be updated
	Valid to a limited extent
	No longer valid
	Don't know

Q23. Optional comments / explanations

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Q24. Please comment, from your country's perspective, which new regional challenges and national needs are relevant to the next period of the IPoW (2018-2021).

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