

Strategic Review of the Warsaw Integrated Programme of Work 2018-2021

Survey analysis and key elements for the development of the Integrated Programme of Work 2022-2025

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The following report summarizes key findings from a survey that was distributed online to all stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Warsaw Integrated Programme of Work (WIPoW) 2018-2021. It also highlights some key elements which will be useful to consider when developing the first draft of the Integrated Programme of Work (IPoW) 2022-2025. Please note that when reference is made to percentages, some questions allowed multiple answers for individual sections – in that case the totals do not add up to 100%.

A – General review of the Warsaw Integrated Programme of Work 2018-2021

Overall, 73 people responded from 28 countries. 20% of them are representatives of member States (Ministries, government agencies, COFFI/EFC representatives).

Most respondents have been involved in several capacities in the implementation of the WIPoW, prominently as Team of Specialist (ToS) member, COFFI/EFC delegate, and other stakeholder (private sector, academia, non-governmental organization).

The themes most relevant to addressing challenges in the region that were identified by respondents include Forest resources (77%); Forest products and markets (72%); The role of the forest sector in a circular bio-economy (56%); Wood Energy (51%).

The survey revealed that the Warsaw Integrated Programme of Work sufficiently contributed to Sustainable Development Goal 15 (61%), Global Forest Goal 2 (48%) and Global Forest Goal 6 (44%). Global Forest Goal 1 on reversing the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management should receive more attention, as well as SDG 6, SDG 11, SDG 13.

On the question of the main achievements of the WIPoW, an analysis of the key words revealed that data collection, monitoring and assessment were considered very successful (8 mentions), along with the Forest Resources Assessment process (5 mentions), and an increased understanding of forests in green/circular economy as well as green jobs (4 mentions each). Capacity-building and communication activities were considered less successful: 5 respondents mention the enhancement of communication and visibility through better use of digital tools as opportunities for improvement. In addition, several respondents mention the discussion on circular bio-economy and sharing good practices in this area which was not sufficiently achieved.

To summarize where most respondents see room for improvement:

- Digital platforms for data and publications; visualization of forest data using new digital technologies;

- Better involvement of national correspondents in discussing format of data collection;
- Capacity building;
- Supporting the transformation of the forest sector towards bio-circular economy and improving the use of up-to date information and knowledge.

A – Proposal for new Integrated Programme of Work 2022-2025

Key element

69% of respondents affirm that the current goals and objectives of the WIPoW are relevant and should not be modified for the new IPoW 2022-2025, although some mention that the objectives of the ToS should be adapted to new challenges.

31% said the goals of the new IPoW should be modified, some of the explanations and suggestions for modification below:

- Assessing the role of forests in climate change mitigation and trade-offs between sequestration in forests vs. wood products;
- More emphasis on forest disturbances (incl. fire), biodiversity, change of species composition of forests;
- Clarify the role/contribution of forests and wood in the circular bio-economy.

Key element

80% of respondents believe that the scope of the WIPoW 2018-2021 addresses the challenges in the region in a meaningful way.

20% of respondents disagreed, providing the following list of recommendations on what could be improved for the next IPoW:

- More attention and analysis in relation to impact of COVID-19 crisis on forest sector and lessons learned for the future;
- Strengthen scientific and innovation dimensions;
- More attention should be given to protection of forests considering disturbances such as fires, pests and diseases, including invasive species;
- Integrate decisions related to forest and forestry under the UNFCCC, Paris Agreement, National Determined Contribution and UNCCD and UNCBD
- Make IPoW and its outputs more visible to relevant actors in the region;
- Explicitly mention: Mediterranean forests; the re-use of pulp waste (black liquor), and the recycling of post-consumer waste wood in wood based panels;
- Avoid duplication of efforts with existing work at national, regional and global levels;
- Digitalisation and IT are promising strategies for forestry which could be discussed to exchange national experience;
- Other important themes include key performance indicators (KPI) for forest sector development (assessment of efficiency), supply chain management.

Key element

Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the existing work areas are still adequate in addressing key challenges in the region (break down of responses below).

	Yes, work area is still adequate		No, work area is no longer adequate	
	Percent	Number of responses	Percent	Number of responses
Work Area 1: Data, monitoring, reporting and assessment	98,59%	70	1,41%	1
Work Area 2: Policy dialogue and advice	91,55%	65	8,45%	6
Work Area 3: Communication and outreach	88,73%	63	11,27%	8
Work Area 4: Capacity-building	92,96%	66	7,04%	5

Comments on how the work areas could be improved include better alignment between practitioners and national policymakers by taking into account local contexts; and better awareness raising of the important role of forests amongst urban population.

Additional feedback on services and other areas of work to include under the new IPoW can be summarized as follows:

- Provide better information about forest damage and adaptation measures to climate change and their consequences for the markets;
- Generally, more emphasis on digitalization and information management throughout the work areas;
- More feedback-loops needed to exchange experiences and showcase research results throughout the year;
- Work more closely with Eurostat with aim to avoid duplicated activities and to harmonize methodology for data assessment in forestry sector. This will contribute to the decrease of workload and pressure on statistics experts;
- UNECE should be co-publisher in State of European Forests;
- Add urban forestry - contribution of Forests/trees in cities;
- Add adaptive forest management for resilient forests long-term (after 2050)
- Guidelines on how to deal with recent forest damages (prevention, monitoring, restoring) - e.g. extreme dry summers, insects, invasive species;
- Much more in-depth study of timber markets: comparison of markets, structuring, import/export issue, legality control issue, evolution of timber prices in the ECE region, subsidies/state aid to the sector, taxation;
- Increase communication with the various Working Parties, support their work and outreach.

B – Joint Working Party (JWP) on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management

The JWP was successful in providing technical guidance and supervision of Teams of Specialists and provides a valuable platform to (1) collect data tailored to the forest sector (e.g. wood energy and JWEE); (2) share developments in forest statistics, including standard definitions; (3) enhance dialogue between technical experts; and (4) provide opportunity for exchange of experience between Teams of Specialists. In addition, the support provided by the JWP to conduct the Forest Products Annual Market Review is extremely important.

The main shortfalls of the JWP include the lack of financial commitment for activities and to support participants; lacking visibility; unbalanced participation of countries and stakeholders in the forest sector. Some ways of addressing the shortfalls can be summarized as follows:

- Would be interesting to have systematic information on the representativeness of the people participating in ToS, in order to judge the relevance of their contribution;
- Apart from the necessary reporting on current activities, it would be beneficial to allow some time during the JWP meetings to carry out in-depth discussion on issues and challenges important for the forest sector;
- There could be a possibility to answer some important questions raised by ToS before the meeting via questionnaire and thereby gain opinions from countries which cannot participate on the JWP and it could facilitate discussion during the meeting;
- In order to allow for proper exchange and networking opportunities, the JWP should be at least three days long.

Key element

Overall, 46% of respondents consider the scope and effectiveness of the JWP adequate to achieve its purposes. Improvements could be made by narrowing the focus of the JWP, e.g. dealing with “management” issues by other means; by reaching lower levels in order to allow proper implementation of the programme; and refocusing the activities of COFFI on analyzing wood markets, their development, opportunities and risks.

B – Teams of Specialists (ToS)

Respondents were asked to rate the performance of each Team of Specialists and assess whether their work should be continued.

Key element

The assessment revealed that most teams were considered relevant and achieving great performance and thereby supporting the implementation of the Integrated Programme of Work. Nevertheless, the Team of Specialists on Green Jobs and the ToS on Forest Communication received more votes for not being longer relevant, which also echoes some of the responses to previous questions regarding the alignment of ToS to the relevance of themes and objectives.

	Great performance and should be continued		Great performance but no longer relevant	
	Percent	Number of responses	Percent	Number of responses
ToS on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)	74,60%	47	6,35%	4
ToS on Sustainable Forest Products	71,19%	42	6,78%	4
ToS on Wood Energy	57,89%	33	8,77%	5
ToS on Forest Products Statistics	75,00%	42	8,93%	5

ToS on the Forest Sector Outlook	67,80%	40	8,47%	5
ToS on Green Jobs - Joint ILO/ECE/FAO Expert Network	43,55%	27	9,68%	6
ToS on Forest Communication - Forest Communicators Network	55,74%	34	9,84%	6

Comments about specific suggestions regarding the work of any individual ToS include the following:

- The priorities, plan of work and the membership of ToS on Boreal forests should be agreed upon after its first official meeting, which should be held in the face-to-face manner;
- Forest Communication ToS overlap with FAO and unclear what they do;
- No need to start preparation of a new Outlook study during the next IPoW, but there should be some simplified tool instead, which should be focused on potential wood supply and their changes;
- The ToS on green jobs has done its work and should be discontinued;
- Strengthen link between Teams of Specialists mandates within the next IPoW;
- Mode of communication between members of ToS could be improved, as well as outreach and visibility on the web;
- Apart from academics, involve people with "field experience";
- ToS on Wood Energy requires better harmonization with energy statistics;
- Perhaps we could make the deliverables clearer and work towards joint (scientific) articles with our ToS.

C – Communication and publications

Key element

A point raised throughout the survey is the need to improve digital platforms to effectively present data and publications and visualize forest data using new digital technologies.

The top three communication tools in need of improvement include: Databases (26%), Website (23%), and Social media (17%).

Ideas on how communication tools should be improved include:

- More user-friendly online databases, considering the following distinction: relevant indicators for policymakers (e.g. Global core set of forest-related indicators); flat file for research;
- Strengthened cooperation with professional media representatives in order to improve forestry related communication and visibility of main messages;
- Develop a database for conversion factors and new products; no central database on forest resources and their development;
- Encourage more young people to attend European Forest Week.

Although separate from the survey, some highlighted insights from the analysis of web statistics are included here as they seem relevant for improving Work Area 3.

- Page visits to Forests Website constitute a small percentage of overall visits to ECE pages (only 1.3%);

- Communication campaigns including the Forests for Fashion initiative and Trees in Cities Challenge attract considerable attention, especially on social media;
- Top 5 downloads in 2019: 1. Price Output Table, 2. FPAMR 2018, 3. Unit Price 1967-2017 4. UN partnership on sustainable fashion programme 5. Unit price 1967-2018 with 604 downloads;
- Forest Information Billboard marks a steady increase in the number of readers, with 5155 total views in 2019, compared to 4757 in 2018, and 3636 in 2017;
- Most viewed videos include: More Heat with Less Wood from 2016 (134 898 views, the highest in the ECE by 40,000), Made in Forests from 2018 (4950 views), Trees in Cities Challenge from 2019 (2571 views).

An overwhelming number of respondents (71%) found the Forest Products Annual Market Review most useful. Other publications that were considered somewhat useful: COFFI Market Forecast (27%), Wood Energy in the ECE region (27%), Guidelines for the Development of a Criteria and Indicator Set (27%), Forest Ownership in the ECE region (27%).

In order for publications to better service the needs of member States and other stakeholders in the region, the publications should be disseminated more effectively and promoted more widely using all available forest-related platforms. They could be accompanied by webinars and extensive social media coverage. In addition, the website could be improved in order to allow easy digital access of publications. Some publications take too long to complete, and the data contained is therefore often outdated. Therefore, there may be a need to reconsider the effort made for publications vs. other means of making information available. Similarly, it is uncertain if old-style publications are as useful as they used to be. Publications should be translated into all official UN languages, at least French, Spanish and Russian. If it is not possible to translate all publications in full, at least their briefs should be translated, and a selection should be translated based on needs assessed by member States. More regular information and analysis of countries' achievements and follow up of the trends forecasted during the yearly COFFI meetings could be useful.

C – Capacity building activities

Particularly useful capacity-building activities include the workshops of the UNECE-FAO UNDA project (e.g. on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management) and the technical workshops and ministerial meetings on Forest Landscape Restoration. Ideas on how to improve capacity building activities:

- Capacity-building activities should focus on the issues which are of value and interest for the whole UNECE region;
- Focus on forestry and industry issues should be balanced;
- Capacity-building activities could be accompanied by knowledge exchange events, where experts from different MS and organizations share their knowledge and best practices;
- Increase visibility and share results and best practices in regional workshops and JWP meetings;
- Support capacity building with case studies and demo activities in SFM.

D – Implementation, Resources and Cooperation

The main reasons that prevented respondents' from increasing their presence in meetings and contribute to activities include lack of funds (61%), limited relevance to topics of work (18%), lack of information on issues at stake (16%), and lack of human resources (10%).

Some ideas on innovative partnerships that could better address the needs of the region include:

- More private sector involvement;
- EU Commission on wood energy reporting for RED II;
- Indigenous people's representatives (Boreal);
- Academia and research institutions could be involved in scientific studies;
- Smart cooperation with Forest Europe;
- Involve UN Environment Geneva in developing innovative partnerships with private sector (e.g. blended finance, new finance instruments).

Ways the Joint Section could improve its work:

- More result-oriented cooperation between ECE and FAO (with each other instead of against each other);
- Achievements about the work areas could be share periodically with the members in order to get feedback and advice;
- ECE/FAO have to engage lower levels of management and make those stakeholders participate as a fundamental part of the programme. Go below the top-hierarchy levels in Eastern European and Central Asian countries to make real progress;
- More interaction with private sector, certifying bodies, NGOs;
- Define more specific targets in policy dialogue and workshop events.