



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/TIM/2007/4
30 July 2007

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

TIMBER COMMITTEE

Sixty-fifth session
8-11 October 2007
Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**PLANNING FOR THE 2007-2008 STRATEGIC REVIEW
OF THE UNECE/FAO INTEGRATED PROGRAMME ON TIMBER AND FORESTRY**

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document gives an overview of the approach taken to the planning of the Strategic Review of the joint integrated sub-programme on timber and forestry, which it has been mandated to undertake every four years. The outcome of the strategic review process will determine priorities up to 2013.

The Committee is invited to review these plans, modify them if necessary and authorize the Secretariat to implement them, so that results can be presented to the joint UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission session in 2008.

I. THE STRATEGIC REVIEW PROCESS

1. The strategic review is an assessment of the Timber and Forestry sub-programme, covering all aspects: broad direction and objectives, mandates of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission and subsidiary bodies, structure and content of programme, resources, methods, partnerships, outputs, etc. As the Strategic Review is not a formal decision-taking process, any changes will be subject to the normal rules of UNECE and FAO.

2. Through the input of a wide variety of stakeholders along with the assessment of selected programme data and self-evaluations, the achievements of the UNECE/FAO programme of the past four years are being reviewed and a programme and strategic plan up to 2013 proposed. The proposed work programme will be discussed during a special session of the Timber Committee in April 2008, allowing for additional stakeholder input, with a consolidated version submitted for approval to the Timber Committee and European Forestry Commission in October 2009.

II. PAST STRATEGIC REVIEWS

3. A first Strategic Review of the UNECE and FAO integrated programme of work on forests and timber was undertaken in 2000 and a second one in 2004 covering the period to 2008.

4. At the last Strategic Review countries and stakeholders were consulted and the responses were discussed at an extended meeting of the joint TC/EFC bureaux at the beginning of April 2004, and the bureaux finalized in May 2004 a proposal adopted at a joint session in October. All items in the present programme have a termination date of 2008, so that any aspect of the programme may be modified if necessary.

III. THE 2007/2008 STRATEGIC REVIEW AND PLAN

5. The Committee and the Commission have agreed to hold the third Strategic Review in 2007/2008 and that the outcome should be endorsed at a joint session of the two bodies in 2008. As the outcome will be a new programme of work for the period 2008-2013, it is proposed to name the process "Strategic Review and Plan". The period covered should be extended to 2013, so that it coincides with the UN and FAO biennial programming structure.¹

6. The secretariat has prepared a draft plan for the implementation of the Strategic Review (Annex), as approved by the joint TC/EFC bureaux, for the consideration of the Committee. ***The Committee is invited to endorse the proposed process listed in the Annex.***

7. On a general level, the secretariat proposes the following main principles to underlie the process:

- (a) All aspects of the ECE/FAO integrated programme should be considered, even the most fundamental. This would include objectives, methods, structures, resources and institutional arrangements.

¹ The strategic review would thus cover the UN Programme Planning biennia 2008/09, 2010/11, and 2012/13.

- (b) Stakeholders and partners should be closely involved in all stages of the process, but decision lies with the Committee and the Commission, in their respective organisational structures.
- (c) The process should be transparent.
- (d) The process should be based, to a greater degree than in the past, on evaluation of the extent to which the programme achieved its goals, using objective and quantitative methods where possible.
- (e) Consensus on all aspects should be achieved by summer 2008.

8. The proposed joint session of the UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission to be held in 2008, probably in Rome, is expected to adopt its programme of work to 2013 based on the Strategic Review to be conducted in the end of 2007 and beginning 2008.

IV. MEETING TO ASSESS EVALUATIONS AND PROPOSALS AND FORMULATE THE STRATEGIC PLAN

9. In the process proposed, one key stage is the “extended bureaux meeting”, tentatively scheduled to be held from 28-30 April 2008, which is intended to be the main occasion for discussion of the strategic plan, after the phases of evaluation and stakeholder input and before formal approval by the joint session of the Timber Committee and the European Forestry Commission in autumn 2008. The essential characteristic of this stage, in earlier “rounds” of the process, was its inclusive nature (no one excluded) and its constructive purpose (objective: to draft a realistic plan based on consensus). In view of the importance of this stage, and to avoid giving the impression that the Committee and the EFC only become involved at the last stage, it has been proposed that this meeting be called a “special session” of the Committee and the Commission to prepare a draft strategic plan for the programme. *The Committee is invited to comment on this proposal.*

Annex

PROPOSALS FOR THE STRATEGIC REVIEW OF THE UNECE/FAO INTEGRATED PROGRAMME OF WORK ON TIMBER AND FORESTS

I. Objectives of the Strategic Review

1. To review the achievements of the UNECE/FAO programme of work in 2004-2008, and agree on a programme and strategic plan for 2008-2013².

II. Process and timing

- (a) By end 2007, circulation of:
 - Accomplishment accounts for 2006-2007 prepared by the secretariat and the leaders of the Teams of Specialists; and
 - The results of self-evaluations undertaken by the secretariat
 - (b) Jan-Feb 2008: Open comment phase (enquiry to all governments and stakeholders)
 - (c) March 2008: 2 day Extended bureaux meeting (bureaux plus other stakeholders who wish to participate)
 - (d) April/May 2008: Finalisation of revised programme by the joint bureaux
 - (e) Summer 2008: Circulation of programme as approved by the joint bureaux
 - (f) Autumn 2008: formal approval of revised programme by joint session of the Timber Committee and European Forestry Commission
2. It is expected that the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) will prepare in 2008 its work programme for the next four-year period up to the Oslo Ministerial Conference. Given the close cooperative relationship between UNECE/FAO and the MCPFE, it would appear appropriate to keep in close contact with the MCPFE process, if necessary adapting the timetable, an intention approved by the joint TC/EFC bureaux and shared by representatives of the General Coordinating Committee of the MCPFE.
 3. Linkage of the UNECE/FAO Strategic Review process with the ongoing FAO Strategic Review will also be ensured.

III. ISSUES

4. The Strategic Review seeks to assess the effectiveness and impact of the subprogramme and could address the following questions:
 - (a) **Strategic objectives and partnerships**
 - (i) What results is the Programme expected to achieve in the next five years?
 - (ii) Do the strategic objectives as at present defined and implemented adequately address the needs of the countries in the region and build on the comparative advantages of UNECE/FAO?
 - (iii) Does the present UNECE/FAO programme fit the current architecture of

² End date extended so that it coincides with the UN and FAO biennial programming cycles.

- (iv) European forestry cooperation (partnerships with MCPFE, EU, private sector and civil society), work effectively and to the benefit of the countries?
- (v) Do the present arrangements provide satisfactory input to global level processes, whether in FAO or the UNFF?

(b) Major results of the programme until 2008

- (i) What were the major results of the Programme in the period since the previous review (2004-2008)?
- (ii) To what extent did the Programme achieve what was planned?

(c) Structure of the programme, activities/outputs and resources

- (i) Is the scope and structure of the programme, organised into five work areas, still appropriate?
- (ii) Do outputs adequately address the needs of users and stakeholders?
- (iii) Is the information generated provided in a timely and relevant manner?
- (iv) Are available resources used efficiently? Should new partnerships be considered?
- (v) Should additional resources be mobilized and if so, how?
- (vi) Has the work of the Teams of Specialists been effective and efficient? Which teams are needed for 2008-2013?

(d) Operations and management

- (i) Could work methods be improved and if so, how?
- (ii) Have the outputs and achievements of the programme been successfully communicated to users?
- (iii) Is the quality of outputs adequate?

(e) Recommendations from the last Strategic Review

- (i) Were the recommendations implemented?
- (ii) Should monitoring and self-evaluations be improved?

IV. METHODOLOGY

5. As done in the past, it is suggested that the Strategic Review gather information on opinions of the programme through an enquiry, addressed to Governments and to stakeholders: the private sector, civil society, research and academic institutions, participants in the UNECE/FAO work, partners, users of the services provided and any others concerned with the area. All responses received would be posted on the website as at previous Strategic Reviews, as well as relevant background information and secretariat papers.

6. In addition to the results of the enquiry, selected programme data will also be reviewed, gathered through reporting in the context of results-based management and assessed along with the results of other self-evaluation exercises, such as a user survey on outputs produced by the UNECE/FAO Timber Section (see ECE/TIM/2007/8).