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Biennial evaluation report 2010-2011

and the draft Strategic Framework for the period 2014-15

Biennial evaluation report 2010-2011 Subprogramme 7: Timber and Forestry

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This note is prepared pursuant to the decision of the Commission (document E/2004/37-E/ECE/1416), requesting Sectoral Committees to conduct biennial evaluations of their work programmes.

The note provides the 2010-2011 biennial performance assessment for the programme of work of the UNECE Timber and Forestry Subprogramme. The evaluation follows the biennial evaluation plan for 2010-2011, which was presented to the Committee at its 68th session.

The Committee is invited to endorse the evaluation report.

I. Introduction

1. At the UNECE Commission session in 2004, member States agreed to place more emphasis on evaluation as a tool to review the implementation of the programme of the Commission. All sectoral Committees were therefore requested by the Commission to conduct biennial evaluations of their respective subprogrammes and to take into account the results of these evaluations in determining their work programmes. The 2005 UNECE reform further strengthened this approach. The biennial evaluations should give an opportunity for the members of each Sectoral Committee to review and reaffirm, on a continuous basis, the relevance of the activities and their clusters in view of the subprogrammes' objectives. The results of these evaluations should contribute to defining subprogramme priorities and the related redistribution of resources.

2. The Timber Committee, at its 67th session, approved a procedure whereby the Bureaux of the Timber Committee and the European Forestry Commission shall conduct the UNECE biennial evaluations for the biennium 2010-2011, based on the framework of clusters of activities and expected accomplishments approved at the 65th session of the Timber Committee.

II. Clusters of activities

3. As approved by the Timber Committee at its 65th session, the clusters of activities of the timber and forestry subprogramme are its five areas of work: Markets and Statistics (1), Forest resource assessment and indicators of sustainable forest management (2), Sector Outlook Studies (3), Social and cultural aspects (4) and Policy and Cross-sectoral issues (5). The expected accomplishments per cluster have been identified on this basis, taking into account also the 2010-2011 programme budget for the subprogramme, approved by the General Assembly. However, no expected accomplishment has been included for work area 4 (social and cultural aspects), as this work is mainly conducted by partner organizations and all identified activities have already been satisfactorily completed by end 2007. Capacity building activities under all work areas are grouped in a separate cluster-level expected accomplishment. This document includes an overview of the clusters of activities and the defined expected accomplishments with their targets and achievements.

Cluster 1: Forest resources

Expected accomplishment

4. Increased ability to measure and report on forest resources as the underlying basis for sustainable forest management.

Indicator of achievement

5. Increased percentage of UNECE countries able to provide satisfactory data on quantitative indicators of sustainable forest management.

Baseline 2008-2009: 70 per cent

Target 2010-2011: 67 per cent

Achievement 2010-2011: 78 per cent

Statement of accomplishments

6. Through UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section assistance, significant improvement in the quantity and quality of collected data was measured in the countries of the pan-European region in their reporting for the Forest Europe/UNECE/FAO report State of Europe's Forests 2011. In all, 36 countries in the Forest Europe region (which comprises 46 ECE member states), have reported on qualitative indicators. Compared with 2007, the response rate and data quality and completeness have significantly improved: 78 per cent (surpassing the target of 67 per cent) of countries provided satisfactory data – an exceptional result as many countries in the region struggle with serious problems with availability of data and reporting capacity. Intensive work on improving accessibility of forest management information has continued. Thanks to support received from Finland, all quantitative data from the *State of Europe's Forests 2011* (SoEF) was made available in an extensive, interactive database, prepared in English and for the first time in Russian.

Lessons learned

7. The comprehensive and inclusive character of the quantitative indicators of sustainable forest management (SFM) ensured that this approach had sufficient flexibility to monitor, measure and evaluate SFM in a changing environment. The steady and consistent promotion of the Criteria and Indicators (C&I), and the evolutionary character of their development, reaffirmed their key role as a basic tool for the evaluation of forest management. The Forestry and Timber Section played an important role in coordinating C&I related work for the countries in the UNECE region. Subsequent assessments have provided evidence that the C&I influenced the structure of national inventory systems, as countries' reporting abilities have increased. The intensive efforts targeting increasing accessibility and visibility of collected data should contribute to further promote C&I as a basic source of information for analysing SFM.

8. A better interlinking of reporting on the regional C&I for SFM with the data collection on the global variables, that are the C&I counterparts at the global level, was an important achievement that occurred thanks to the initiative by the Forestry and Timber Section. A success of this initiative should result in the increased visibility of information on forest and SFM. Harmonised international data would be more suitable for implementation at national level, e.g. for including in the national statistical yearbooks. At the same time mutual involvement of the Forestry and Timber Section and FAO Forest Resource Assessment Team in collection, analysis and dissemination of information about regional and global reports should significantly increase an availability of forest related information. Harmonisation of the reporting should ensure achieving the goals with reduced

efforts; thus this will result in an economisation of the secretariat's resources and a diminishing a reporting burden for countries. It has to be underlined that better connection between the regional and global reporting was introduced in response to postulates from countries, and positive results of this initiative should also contribute to a better recognition of the secretariats.

9. When designing the new National Enquiry for the SoEF 2011, all efforts were made to elaborate a structure which uses information already reported for the global FRA 2010. The result of this exercise, which already resulted in better linked information, resulted in revealing areas where further improvement would be achieved. However, the prerequisite for success was the stable involvement of partners from international organizations and countries. The process of coordination of reporting is ongoing and an even higher level of integration will be applied in the course of the next (2015) cycle.

Cluster 2: Forest policies and institutions

Expected accomplishment

10. Increased ability to monitor forest policies and institutions, in view of strengthening the institutional and legal framework.

Indicators of achievement

11. Increased percentage of UNECE countries able to provide satisfactory data on qualitative indicators of sustainable forest management (policies, institutions, instruments).

Baseline 2008-2009: 70 per cent

Target 2010-2011: 67 per cent

Achievement 2010-2011: 80 per cent

12. Increased percentage of UNECE countries with national forest programmes or similar holistic forest sector policy frameworks

Baseline 2008-2009: 71 per cent

Target 2010-2011: 65 per cent

Achievement 2010-2011: 80 per cent

Statement of accomplishments

13. The programme has improved its ability to monitor policies and institutions, notably through the collection and validation of information for the FAO Forest Resources Assessment on policies, institutions and instruments, which drew on the information available for the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) qualitative indicators for the 2011 State of Europe's Forests report.

14. In all, 37 countries (and the European Commission), accounting for more than 99 per cent of total forest and other wooded land in the Forest Europe region (which comprises 46 ECE member States), have reported on qualitative indicators. Compared with 2007, the response rate and data quality and completeness have significantly improved.

15. National forest programmes (NFP) are a participatory process of policy planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation at the national and/or sub-national level geared at further improving sustainable forest management and its contribution to sustainable development. All reporting countries stated that an NFP or similar process existed, half of which were "formal NFP processes". NFP or similar processes existed in all 37 countries

that reported with just under half (17) recording that a “formal NFP process” existed, i.e. the process was explicitly acknowledged and referred to as a “NFP process”. Among the other 20 countries, half reported that their NFP process was “explicitly guided by NFP principles” and half that a “similar process” was in use. “Similar processes” tended to be featured most in South and South-East Europe, but were also reported by Belgium, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Several countries in East and South-East Europe made specific efforts to establish and run formal processes or processes explicitly guided by NFP principles over the last decade.

Lessons learned

16. The comprehensive and inclusive character of the qualitative and quantitative indicators of SFM ensured that this approach had sufficient flexibility to monitor, measure and evaluate SFM in a changing environment. The steady and consistent promotion of the Criteria and Indicators, and the evolutionary character of their development, reaffirmed their key role as a basic tool for the evaluation of forest management, and the importance of the Forestry and Timber Section in coordinating this work for the countries in the UNECE region. Subsequent assessments have provided evidence that the Criteria and Indicators influenced the structure of national inventory systems, as countries’ reporting abilities have increased. The intensive efforts targeting increasing accessibility and visibility of collected data should contribute to further promote Criteria and Indicators as a basic source of information for analysing SFM. Flexible methods of work and tools applied by the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section have allowed for timely, often anticipatory, and appropriate actions that addressed emerging issues. However, the prerequisite for success was the continued involvement of partners from countries and international organizations.

Cluster 3: Markets and statistics

Expected accomplishment

17. Increased understanding of the sound use of wood, leading to policies to promote it and increased ability to monitor it

Indicators of achievement

18. Increased percentage of UNECE countries with policies in place on the sound use of wood, whether as part of national forest programmes or not

Baseline 2008-2009: 48 per cent

Target 2010-2011: 47 per cent

Achievement 2010-2011: 64 per cent

19. Percentage of UNECE region countries able to provide satisfactory responses to the UNECE/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/International Tropical Timber Organization/Eurostat Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire

Baseline 2008-2009: 74 per cent

Target 2010-2011: 70 per cent

Achievement 2010-2011: 61 per cent

Statement of accomplishments

20. The sound use of wood is a prerequisite for the efficient and sustainable contribution of the forest sector to sustainable development of societies throughout the UNECE region.

A sound use of wood involves taking decisions on its optimal use for industrial purposes, and for purposes of climate change mitigation, e.g. through renewable energy generation.

21. Workshops and seminars organised by the Forestry and Timber Section provided fora for discussion of emerging economic and policy related issues, often related to the sound use of wood. Among numerous topics addressed by the meetings was the role of the green economy, regional forest information, payment for eco-system services, increased use of wood, and the extent of the use of wood for generation of renewable energy. With 64 per cent of UNECE region countries with policies in place, exceeding the target of 47 per cent, this indicator shows that countries have increasingly adopted policies on the sound use of wood and are better informed through the numerous activities of the Section. In all, 36 countries in the Forest Europe region (which comprises 46 ECE member States), have reported on qualitative indicator B4: Production and use of wood. The percentage of UNECE region countries providing satisfactory responses to the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire has fallen to 61 per cent below the targeted 70 per cent.

Lessons learned

22. The work of the Forestry and Timber Section has shown that its convening power, which brings different parts of the forest sector together including policy makers and industry, as well as other sectors in order to address relevant themes, is conducive to dialogue on the sound use of wood. This has led to changed understandings, perceptions, and actions. The work has also raised the awareness of sector representatives with regard to important climate change and energy aspects. Intensive cooperation with partners has shown the way towards being consulted by institutional as well as national policy makers. The Section's work on wood energy and potential wood supply, coordinated with the European Commission, has been reflected in the EU templates for national renewable energy action plans. Building on this approach, the Section will continue to address relevant climate change and energy issues. Work with countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) has increased response rates from the sub-region throughout face-to-face meetings. Unfortunately the decline in the rate to 61 per cent shows the impact of the financial crisis, due to increased confidentiality and reduced national resources.

Cluster 4: Capacity building activities carried out under all work areas

Expected accomplishment

23. Increased capacity of countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-East Europe to achieve sustainable forest management at the national level, notably through developing appropriate policy measures¹

Indicators of achievement

24. Number of countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-East Europe adopting national forest programmes

Baseline 2008-2009: 12

Target 2010-2011: 14

Achievement 2010-2011: 14

¹ This "cluster" comprises the capacity building activities carried out under all work areas.

25. Percentage of participants of capacity building activities regarding them as useful

Baseline 2008-2009: 85 per cent

Target 2010-2011: 75 per cent (revised)

Achievement 2010-2011: 77 per cent

26. The achievement is based on the evaluation forms completed by meeting participants in which they rate the overall quality of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the highest): the baseline of 75 per cent reflects a weighted average rating for all such meetings of 3.5 on this scale. Every increase of 0.1 in the rating equates to 1.7 per cent. If every participant in every meeting gave a 5 rating, the achievement would be 100 per cent satisfaction. The per cent is rounded down in every case.

Statement of accomplishments

27. Many of the activities under the UNECE Timber and Forestry programme contributed to the increased number of countries in the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-East Europe adopting national forest programmes, notably the topical discussions and seminars organized. 14 countries in this region have adopted national forest programmes, meeting the set objective. Activities under the ECE Timber and Forestry programme contributed to advancing the development of national forest programmes of countries in the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-East Europe. Of the surveyed participants, 77 per cent found capacity building workshops organised by the programme useful, in particular in areas such as forest products markets, forest resources reporting and forest policy. The capacity building workshops facilitated exchange of best practices and experience on forest policy formulation, institutional reform, market information systems, wood energy policies, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. They brought together countries facing similar challenges helping them to promote policy dialogue and strengthen regional or sub-regional cooperation.

Lessons learned

28. Capacity building work has revealed its effectiveness to make a difference, by disseminating concepts and knowledge on the forest sector and sustainable forest management at the national level, integrating them into existing networks, arranging for an exchange of experiences to identify good practices and providing policy advice. Extra-budgetary funding has not been sufficient to meet the programme's aspirations in this regard and to reach its full potential, based on its pillars of expertise in forest policies, markets, resources and outlook. Efforts have been undertaken to attract such funding, e.g. through the UN Development Accounts. Results are expected to build on this work through established networks in the next biennium.

Cluster 5: Outlook Studies and cross-sectoral component

Expected accomplishment

29. Increased understanding of policy issues and outlook, comprising the interaction of the forest sector with other sectors, leading to enhanced policy formulation²

² Relevant work areas: Work Areas 3 (outlook studies) and 5 (cross-sectoral component).

Indicator of achievement:

30. Percentage of policy makers and other stakeholders regarding selected policy forums and workshops as useful³

Baseline 2008-2009: 87 per cent

Target 2010-2011: 75 per cent (revised)

Achievement 2010-2011: 77 per cent

31. Percentage of selected users regarding selected relevant studies/publications as useful

Baseline 2008-2009: 87 per cent

Target 2010-2011: 75 per cent

Achievement 2010-2011: 87 per cent

Statement of accomplishments

32. In response to the growing concern around the impact of trade and trade-related measures on timber markets, a workshop on “Emerging Trade Measures in Timber Markets” was organized jointly with the World Trade Organization (WTO). The workshop was a unique opportunity to get a comprehensive overview of the increasingly complex regulatory framework impacting trade of wood and wood products. Participants discussed the emergence of tariff and non-tariff measures intended to promote development of domestic markets or to curb illegal logging and the trade of illegally harvested forest products.

33. The International Year of Forests in 2011 provided an opportunity for increasing the recognition of forests and the significant contribution that they can make to sustainable development, poverty eradication and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals. During 2011, two key reports were finalized on the state and future of the European forest sector, these being the Forest Europe/UNECE/FAO report State of Europe's Forests 2011 and the UNECE/FAO European Forest Sector Outlook Study II. Together, these two publications provide a comprehensive view of European forests from 1990 to 2030. As customary, the Forest Products Annual Market Review, a comprehensive analysis of markets across the UNECE region was published in 2010 and 2011. A survey of the Report's users, predominantly experts coming from various institutions, organizations and forest-related processes in the UNECE region was performed. On a scale from 1 to 4 the average evaluation of the Review's usefulness was 3.51 (between "somewhat" and "very useful"). This is equivalent to a usefulness rating of around 87 per cent.

34. A workshop on ‘Payment for Ecosystem Services – what role for a green economy’ was also organized as part of the UNECE Forest and Water Week (4-8 July). The workshop addressed issues linked to payments for different ecosystem services to help governments and stakeholders share experiences and understand which policies and incentives have been and could be most effective in implementing Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes.

35. Numerous workshops on wood energy have improved the understanding of the possibilities and implications of improving and enhancing its use in a given context, considering national circumstances. As a result of these workshops, capacity has been built

³ See above for explanation of how achievement is estimated.

to develop modern wood energy markets and bioenergy policies in different parts of the region.

Lessons learned

36. The programme has been addressing the major concerns and issues raised by stakeholders and governments through the Strategic Review through its convening power, addressing major challenges and emerging issues. However, beyond the assessment of meetings organized under the programme, it remains difficult to measure the increased understanding of policy issues and outlook by policy makers and other stakeholders.
