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**Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations****Economic Commission for Europe****Food and Agriculture Organization****Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry****European Forestry Commission****Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics,****Economics and Management****Forty-fourth session**

Geneva, 31 May -2 June 2023

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Integrated Programme of Work review process**Options for the review process of the Integrated Programme
of Work****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

The joint session of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry of the Economic Commission for Europe (at its seventy-ninth session) and the European Forestry Commission of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (at its forty-first session) adopted the integrated programme of work (IPoW) of the Joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section for the period 2022–2025 (Annex II of Document ECE/TIM/2021/2–FO:EFC/2021/2).

The following document outlines options on how the review process of the Integrated Programme of Work could be organized.

The Joint Working Party is invited to discuss the proposed options and indicate their preference for transmission to the Joint session of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry of the Economic Commission for Europe (at its eighty-first session) and the European Forestry Commission (EFC) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (at its forty-second session) scheduled to be held in November 2023.

1. Background

1. The joint session of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry of the Economic Commission for Europe (at its seventy-ninth session) and the European Forestry Commission of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (at its forty-first session) adopted the integrated programme of work (IPoW) of the Joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section (Joint Section) for the period 2022 – 2025 (Annex II of Document ECE/TIM/2021/2–FO:EFC/2021/2).
2. A review of the IPoW has to be undertaken every four years. The outcome of the review process during 2024-2025 will determine priorities for the Integrated Programme of Work up to 2029.
3. The Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management (Joint Working Party), as a subsidiary body of the Committee, contributes to the implementation of the IPoW through its Teams of Specialists as well as technical advice.
4. It is in this context that the Joint Working Party invites member States to provide guidance on how to best conduct the review process of the Integrated Programme of Work 2022-2025.
5. The objective of the review process is to assess the scope, structure and content of the programme; methods; partnerships; outputs; objectives; distribution of work under COFFI and EFC and COFFI and will consist of (a) the evaluation of the 2022-2025 IPoW, taking into consideration the results of its implementation and past experience; and (b) the development of a proposal for the IPoW for 2026-2029.
6. Based on the guidance received, the secretariat will prepare a tentative timeline for a roadmap of the review of the Integrated Programme of Work for the consideration by the Joint Session of COFFI and EFC in November 2023.
7. The draft IPoW 2025-2029 would be prepared in the first half of 2024 in order to give member States enough time to discuss it in 2024 and 2025. The Programme of Work 2025-2029 is expected to be submitted for endorsement to the joint sessions of COFFI and the EFC in autumn 2025.

2. Options for the review process conduct of the Integrated Programme of Work

8. The secretariat proposes the following three options for conducting the review of the current Integrated Programme of Work to be organized in 2024:
 - Hybrid workshop(s)
 - External evaluation
 - Self-evaluation.
9. The first option is a secretariat-organized workshop with member States - in a one-day English-only hybrid format and would be similar to the review process conducted in 2020¹. The workshop will be open for officially nominated representatives from member States only and will be held in Geneva with an option of online participation. The secretariat, in consultation with the Joint Bureau Members, will prepare a draft text of the IPoW 2026-2029 that will be based on the current IPoW. The review of the IPoW will cover the Programme of work, the Terms of Reference of the Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management, the composition and Terms of Reference of the ECE/FAO Teams of Specialists and the Guidelines for ECE/FAO Teams of Specialists. Member States receive the zero-draft text with the invitation for written feedback prior to the workshop. The secretariat will summarize the suggestions received in written and share it with Heads of Delegations prior to the workshop. During the workshop, participants will be invited to discuss the suggested amendments and agree on a revised text. The first workshop

¹ <https://unece.org/info/events/event/349206>

could be held back-to-back with the Joint Working Party session in 2024 in order to allow for a maximum number of in-person delegations. If necessary, a second such workshop could be organized back-to-back with the next COFFI session in November 2024. This option has no budget implications for member States.

10. The second option is a thorough external evaluation conducted by a third-party independent evaluator. The independent evaluator will review the relevance, coherence, efficiency and sustainability of the IPoW in the context of the needs of member States and the shifting global policy agenda. This could include but would not be limited to using a questionnaire to member States and observers, which could be followed up by interviews with stakeholders. The independent evaluator will provide a report on the findings of the review and will prepare a draft IPoW 2026-2029 that would be presented and discussed during the Joint Working Party 2025. The external evaluator's review will assess all parts of the IPoW, including the Programme of work, the Terms of Reference of the Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management, the composition and Terms of Reference of the ECE/FAO Teams of Specialists and the Guidelines for ECE/FAO Teams of Specialists. This option has budget implication of around 20,000 USD and member States would be required to pledge funds for an EXCOM approved project to finance this external evaluation.

11. The third option would be a self-evaluation that would be conducted by the secretariat. The secretariat will review the IPoW in the context of the needs of member States and the shifting global policy agenda and the resources available in the secretariat. This could include but would not be limited to using a questionnaire to member States and observers, which could be followed up by interviews with stakeholders. The findings and draft IPoW 2026-2029 that would be presented and discussed during the Joint Working Party 2025. The self-evaluation will assess all parts of the IPoW, including the Programme of work, the Terms of Reference of the Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management, the composition and Terms of Reference of the ECE/FAO Teams of Specialists and the Guidelines for ECE/FAO Teams of Specialists. This option has no budget implications for member States.

3. Preference to be transmitted to the Committee

10. The Joint Working Party is invited to discuss the proposed options and indicate their preference for transmission to the Joint session of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry of the Economic Commission for Europe (at its eighty-first session) and the European Forestry Commission (EFC) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (at its forty-second session) scheduled to be held in November 2023.
