



Food and Agriculture
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SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

Outcomes of the European Forestry Commission external review process

Agenda item 6 d



EFC Review background

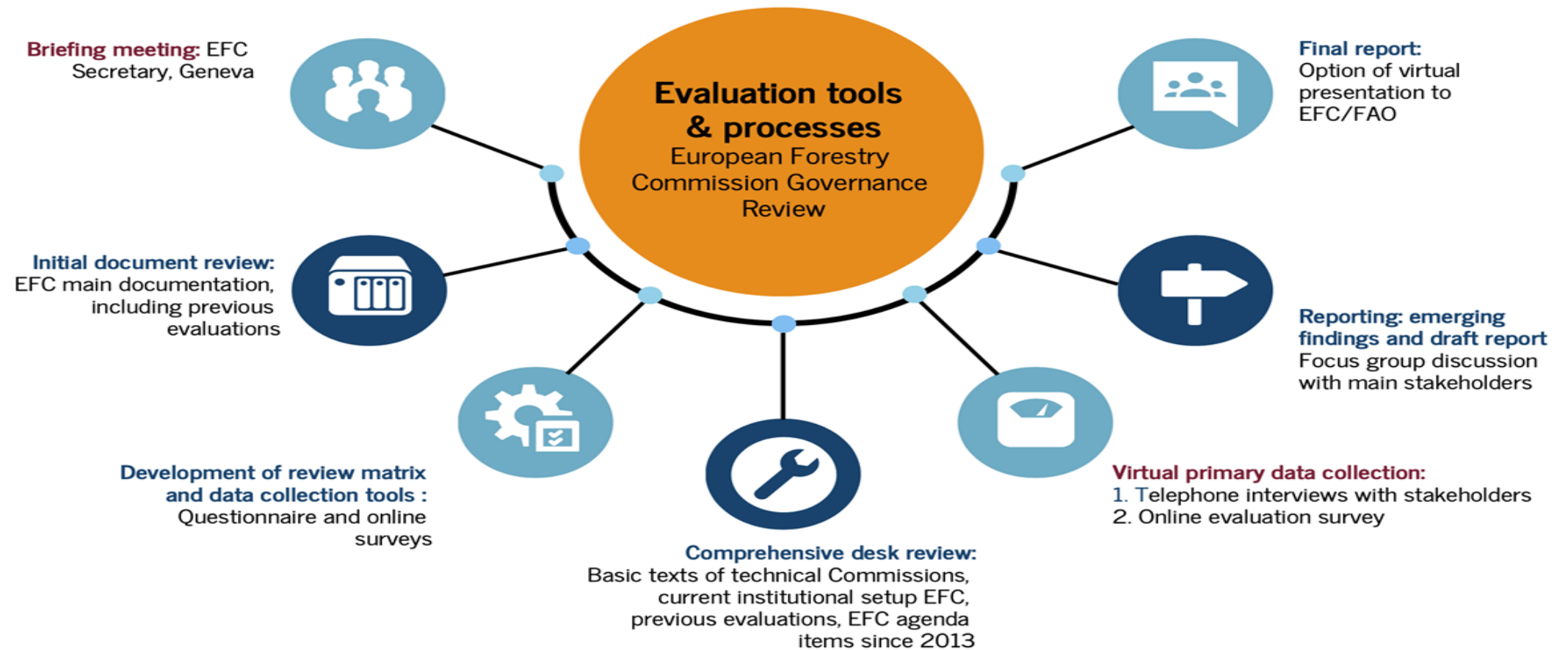
- The Forty-first session of the EFC requested FAO to consider undertaking a review of the EFC with the aim to further enhance its:

Relevance – extent to which they meet the needs of FAO and its Members in providing a platform to discuss regional forest-related issues; focus on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Strategic Framework of FAO (2022-31); contribution to international processes and goals, including to the Regional Conferences;

Efficiency – what benefits do Statutory Bodies bring in terms of policy dialogues, technical exchanges and contributing to their Members' goals, timelines of decision-making based on meeting discussions and reports; links to FAO's reforms; quality of documentation, etc;

Effectiveness – how useful are the Statutory Bodies in formulating and implementing policy and in studying and reporting on technical matters; role and contribution to performance in the context of the FAO Strategic Framework (2022-31).

EFC Review Process





EFC Review Process

- Senior Consultant: **Dr Achim Engelhardt** conducted the review (September-December 2022)
- External evaluation consultant reached 39 stakeholders,
 - including 29 through interviews, with a response rate of 20% EFC Member States (8) and 16% from COFFI Member States (9). Ten stakeholders completed an online survey.
 - **Response was requested for following questions.**
- Is EFC using the right approaches for advising and acting on key forestry issues in the region?
- Is the EFC's governance structure fit for purpose to meet Member State's and FAO's needs and expectations?
- Is the EFC achieving results in responding to trends in the forestry sector?



Key findings of the review

Is the EFC doing the right thing? Members' needs for having EFC vary significantly. Room for improvement emerges to enhance its relevance for FAO and Members.

Is the EFC achieving results? EFC seems most appreciated for its technical work, given that it is not a high-level political body and due to the region's crowded context for policy formulation.

Is the EFC's governance structure fit for purpose? The EFC governance structure is dysfunctional and constitutes a reputational risk for FAO.



Conclusions of the review

Relevance

EFC operates in a crowded context, with Forest Europe catching the attention of EU Member States and EU Accession States, where the EFC struggles to sustain its relevance. A niche appears for EFC serving as a platform for technical exchange between Eastern European, Balkan, Central Asia and the Caucasus countries on one hand and the rest of the EFC Members on the other hand, with the caveat that most countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus (except Armenia and Uzbekistan) are not EFC Members. Enlarging the number of EFC Members could be one option for EFC to explore with the aim of filling more extensively such niche.

The relevance of EFC for FAO seems mostly attributed to it being a statutory body, though with seemingly limited substantive input to decision making within the overall FAO governance structure.



Conclusions of the review

Efficiency

On paper, the FAO-UNECE Integrated Programme of Work arrangement is an example of joint UN work since 1947. However, in practice, changes need to be considered in the institutional set-up to be more effective in driving the Regional work.



Conclusions of the review

Effectiveness

While EFC has a dual mandate for technical and policy support to Members, its relevance seems primarily due to its the technical side. This could probably be attributed to Members' long trust in FAO as a technical organization with international technical leadership. The space for policy support seems largely occupied by Brussels for EU Member States and EU Accession States. EFC may wish to consider the political map in order to maximize its effectiveness in serving its Members, especially in view of the continued scarce resources.



Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations emerge for consideration from the EFC governance review:

Relevance:

R1: Focus EFC on the technical exchange between the Eastern European, Balkan, Central Asia and the Caucasus countries and the rest of the EFC Members, a niche identified in this review. For this purpose, EFC may wish to consider adoption of the Russian language – being a prevailing common language - as an official EFC language to facilitate communication with some of those new Members.

R2: As only two countries from Central Asia and the Caucasus are EFC members, EFC membership need to be extended to all countries in those two sub-regions to attain a wider engagement. FAO should consider using extra budgetary resources. Where possible, to facilitate access to participation from new Members in Central Asia and the Caucasus in EFC meetings.



Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations emerge for the EFC from this governance review:

Efficiency:

R3 Serious consideration by both partners in the Joint Section of where and how they wish to take their partnership and joint work to serving more effectively the needs of the Member States

Effectiveness:

R4: As for recommendation 1, EFC should consider focusing on its niche of technical support and exchange function to Members where it has its comparative advantage. Should policy support become of higher priority in the future, policy support emanating from closer cooperation with the Forest Europe and UNFF could be considered.



Points for consideration

- The Commission may wish to invite Members to:
 - a) Review and consider the findings of the external review
 - b) Provide guidance to all stakeholders on the implementation of the recommendations of the external review.



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**Thank you
for your attention!**