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Integrated Programme of Work:

Review of Draft 1 Integrated Programme of Work 2026-2029

Draft 1 of the Integrated Programme of Work 2026-2029

Summary

The following document was prepared by the secretariat in response to a request by the 2023 joint session of the Economic Commission for Europe Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry and the Food and Agriculture Organization European Forestry Commission.

The document includes comments and input received during the past months (informal online feedback session on 15 April 2024, subsequent written submissions, informal consultations on 22 May 2024, forty-fifth session of the Joint Economic Commission for Europe and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management, subsequent written comments). The Joint Bureau was also consulted for the preparation of this draft. Open items are placed in square brackets.

Please note, the secretariat adjusted the content of the Integrated Programme of Work to match activities and outputs with the resources provided by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for its implementation by the Joint United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Office.

Delegations are invited to review and provide comments. This will lead to the preparation of Draft 2 for further consultation and finalization in 2025.

The document is submitted according to A/78/6 (Section 20); ECE/TIM/2023/2-FAO:EFC/2023/2, para 70.



I. Integrated Programme of Work

1. The Integrated Programme of Work (IPoW) 2026-2029 is a non-binding compilation of activities to be carried out in coordination by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) through the Joint ECE/FAO Office (“The Joint Office”) in the thematic and service areas defined below and under their respective mandates and work programmes. In the case of ECE, its annual programme plan, budget and the Programme of Work for ECE Subprogramme 7, Forests and the Forest Industry (adopted by its Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry, COFFI, every year) outlines the mandates and, exclusively, determines the availability of regular budget funds. In the case of FAO, this includes staff and resources from the regional budget. The IPoW is not endowed with any specifically allocated budget and serves as a means of coordinating some of the regional activities under ECE’s Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and FAO’s European Forestry Commission (EFC). The present IPoW only contains activities carried out jointly by ECE and FAO via the Joint Office in Geneva. Other organization-specific mandated activities are contained in each organization’s respective programmes of work and will be implemented by each organization separately.

2. The IPoW contributes to the implementation of regional and global processes within the existing mandates of ECE and FAO including: the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 and declared Global Forest Goals, the Global Biodiversity Framework (CBD), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification including the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement adopted at COP21, and the Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use endorsed at UNFCCC COP26.

3. The IPoW is implemented jointly by the two organizations through the Joint Office, based on a partnership agreement signed in 2012 between ECE and FAO which outlines the working modalities of the cooperation.

4. The IPoW 2026-2029 goes beyond previous IPoWs in assigning the responsibilities of each organization to specific deliverables under the below thematic priorities (see Annex I). The oversight responsibility for the implementation of the IPoW remains with the members of COFFI and EFC.

5. The IPoW is implemented in cooperation with member States and regional economic integration organizations in close cooperation with relevant organizations and processes at all levels and other relevant stakeholders participating in the intergovernmental processes of COFFI and EFC.

A. Objective of the Integrated Programme of Work

6. The IPoW aims to assist member States and regional economic integration organizations to strengthen sustainable management of forests, taking into account public participation, to enhance the contribution of forests including their functions, ecosystem services and products to sustainable development, climate action and biodiversity conservation in the ECE region.

7. It is implemented by the Joint Office in cooperation with other relevant partners and resources made available by both ECE and FAO, linking core related functions, namely: analytical and normative work; data collection, monitoring and assessment; international policy dialogue and advice; capacity-building; and communication. The IPoW will be implemented according to the guiding principles in Section E.

B. Scope

Geographical scope

8. The IPoW covers the ECE region, i.e. all fifty-six member States of ECE – in line with the membership of the on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI and the members States of the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC)¹. The region covers about 1.7 billion hectares of forests.

Substantive scope

9. Promote cooperation, collect, process and disseminate information and data, research, studies and analysis to implement the thematic priorities defined below in coordination with other international organizations whenever relevant and within the technical, administrative and budgetary frameworks of the hosting organizations.

10. Facilitate exchange of national and sub-national experiences and best practices, monitor progress on achieving sustainable forest management, and help member States measure progress towards achieving the relevant Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests.

11. Build capacity, raise awareness and prepare dedicated guidance and publications on the themes covered by the IPoW upon availability of resources and in coordination with FAO and ECE activities beyond the IPoW and other relevant organizations.

C. Services and thematic priorities

12. The key services and thematic priorities of the IPoW are listed in the following in no particular order of importance. A table listing the organization responsible for the delivery of the activities under the thematic priorities is contained in Annex I. Specific outputs will be agreed upon by the Joint Bureau and during the respective sessions of the intergovernmental bodies.

Servicing intergovernmental meetings and policy dialogues

13. Intergovernmental meetings include the following formal meetings. They are held in-person². They may be held in online and hybrid mode in the future and upon availability of funds. where possible

- (a) Joint session of COFFI and EFC;
- (b) Joint Working Party [tbd.].

¹ COFFI member States are: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, and Uzbekistan. EFC members include : Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, European Union (Member Organization), Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uzbekistan.

² The Office of the Director-Division of Conference Management of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) informed Geneva based organizations on 25 January 2024 that as of 22 January 2024, it ceased servicing all hybrid or virtual meetings on any platform, system, or tool (e.g., Zoom, Interprefy, Webex, etc.). The reason given was the absence of the mandate and legislative framework for the United Nations to service meetings as hybrid and virtual meetings. They might be held in online and hybrid mode in the future and upon availability of funds.

14. Policy dialogues are organized upon request by member States and are subject to availability of resources. They may be held in online and hybrid mode where possible. [policy dialogues should encourage synergies among forest agencies and ongoing processes in the ECE region including the European Forest Alliance (EFA) or the Montreal Process – proposal to delete].

15. **List of thematic priorities**

Sustainable management of forests:

- (a) Disturbance and damage;
- (b) Assessment of forests.

Data and Information:

- (a) Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire;
- (b) Global Forest Resources Assessment;
- (c) Joint Wood Energy Enquiry.
- (d) Pan-European data collection.

Forest products and services:

- (a) Wood energy;
- (b) Bioeconomy and circular economy / approaches;
- (c) [Sustainable production and consumption];
- (d) Market Assessments of production, trade and consumption of [wood] products;
- (i) Forest Products Annual Market Review;
- (ii) Data Briefs;
- (iii) Country market statements;
- (iv) Market statement;
- (v) Other ad hoc mandated assessments.

Foresight:

Preparations for a future outlook study to start during the second half of IPoW period upon request by member States and subject to available resources.

D. Implementation Modalities

16. COFFI and EFC discuss and adopt the IPoW in a joint session. Subsequently, the IPoW is submitted to the Executive Committee of the ECE. It will also be approved by FAO.

17. **Reporting and prioritization:** The IPoW implementation progress through the tasks assigned to the two organizations (see Annex I) will be reported at the joint sessions. A review and prioritization might be undertaken two years after coming into force of the current IPoW.

18. **Funding and staff resources:** Both organizations ensure that adequate and equitable resources are made available to implement the IPoW. This includes for ECE as well as FAO two professional staff respectively as well as operational resources. For ECE, staff and operational resources (e.g. Joint Office space, meeting rooms, interpretation, layout, formatting and translation of documents and publications, printing, IT software, storage and maintenance etc.) are assigned through the ECE's annual programme plan and budget and the Programme of Work for ECE Subprogramme 7, Forests and the Forest Industry. For FAO, this includes staff and funding from the regional budget. Annex I includes an indicative table of thematic priorities funded through the regular budgets of ECE or FAO as well as required extrabudgetary resources.

19. **Extrabudgetary resources and voluntary contributions** are necessary to cover the full implementation of the IPoW. Member States, regional economic integration organizations and other donors will support the implementation of the IPoW through financial and/or in-kind contributions. Funding gaps will be presented to the Joint Bureau and delegates of COFFI and EFC. ECE and FAO commit to undertake fundraising to raise equal shares.
20. **Joint sessions** of COFFI and EFC will be held every 2 years under the auspices of the ECE or FAO (alternating each time). Due regard shall be given to COFFI's and Commission's official languages when organizing meetings and issuing publications and documents. The official languages of COFFI are English, French and Russian. The official languages of Commission are English, French and Spanish.
21. Meeting rooms, interpretation and official documents (processing, translation into English, French and Russian) at joint sessions of COFFI and Commission organized by ECE will be covered by ECE's regular budget resources. FAO will cover Spanish translation of documents and Spanish interpretation.
22. Official documents at joint sessions of COFFI and Commission organized by FAO are submitted for processing and translation with costs covered by FAO. Translation of official documents and meeting interpretation into English, French and Spanish will be covered by FAO regular budget resources. ECE will cover Russian translation of documents and Russian interpretation.
23. Online and hybrid meeting formats should be used as appropriate wherever authorized (see para 13), convenient, funded and feasible, to allow for broader participation.
24. Member States are encouraged to consider hosting joint sessions of COFFI and EFC.
25. **[(tbd.) The Joint Working Party on Forest Products Statistics, Economics and Management (JWP)]** will be held annually. Meeting rooms, interpretation and official documents (processing, translation into English, French and Russian) of the JWP are covered by ECE's regular budget resources.]
26. **Joint publications** on IPoW themes are produced and implemented with the resources provided by the two organizations. They should be published in digital format only.
27. **Communication:** Effective communication by both organizations should enhance the visibility and promote the work and products under the IPoW. Member States should provide adequate means to ensure the funding of this activity.
28. **Broader Engagement:** A broader engagement by member States and regional economic integration organizations will require resources to finance the participation of delegates from eligible countries with economies in transition.
29. **Teams of Specialists (ToS):** The ECE ToSs covering activities related to this IPoW will provide advice and undertake activities that support the implementation of the IPoW. Their terms of reference are approved by COFFI and the Teams are subsequently established by the ECE Executive Committee every 2 years. Secretariat services are provided by ECE (and FAO in case ToS are serviced by FAO) through separate budgetary processes. The work and expected outputs of the ToSs are aligned with the ECE programmatic budget, and some cover activities under this IPoW and its objectives. These ToSs support the Joint Office in the IPoW's implementation, recognizing the importance of the involvement of the scientific community and forest practitioners. All ToSs report annually to the Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management [tbd.]. Annex II of the IPoW contains (for information purposes) the list of ToSs whose work contributes to the implementation of the IPoW. Their terms of reference (TORs) as well as the "Guidelines for COFFI Teams of Specialists" and the ECE's "Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of teams of specialists within UNECE" (ECE/EX/2/Rev.1) are available on the website³. Please note: The ToS on Boreal Forests operates under the COFFI's Programme of Work.

³ <https://unece.org/forests/teams-specialists>;

E. Principles guiding implementation of the Integrated Programme of Work

Implementation should be guided by the following principles:

30. **Partnership:** There will be a strong focus on working in partnership with international, regional and sub-regional actors in all thematic priorities of the IPoW as the most effective way of optimizing benefits, resources and avoiding potential duplication of activities. COFFI and EFC will seek and welcome cooperation on any of the relevant thematic priorities.
31. **Coordination:** ECE and FAO will identify activities and opportunities funded from other ECE and FAO resources that are aligned with and support the implementation of the IPoW and support its implementation.
32. **Outreach to other constituencies:** In the implementation of the IPoW, COFFI and EFC will include constituencies beyond the traditional forest community to ensure the relevance of the forest sector and its contribution to other sectors.
33. **Involvement of the private sector and civil society:** The private sector and civil society are key actors for sustainable forest management, sustainable forest products and services and the transition towards circular economy and bioeconomy approaches and the global goals. The participation of the private sector and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in the work of COFFI and EFC will be actively sought, in line with the ECE and FAO organizational policies and rules of procedure. Increased participation from various relevant stakeholders should be encouraged.
34. **Human rights, youth inclusion, mainstreaming a gender perspective and respect of the rights of people with disabilities:** The IPoW gives due consideration to human rights, including indigenous and local community engagement and making the concerns and experiences of women, men, youth and people with disabilities an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its activities. This ensures that all people benefit equitably, and inequality is not perpetuated (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1997). Mainstreaming a gender perspective and respecting the rights of people with disabilities is a central part of ECE and FAO's strategic frameworks and their policies and programmes. Outreach to youth will be an integral part of the implementation of the IPoW.

Annex I

Indicative list of activities, lead organizations and resources allocated¹

Intergovernmental meetings and events

Activity	Lead	Organizational Resources allocated	Funding gap
Joint session of COFFI and EFC organized by ECE	UNECE	UNECE (RB)	
Joint session of COFFI and EFC organized by FAO	FAO	FAO (RB)	
Joint Working Party	FAO	FAO (RB)	
Teams of Specialists supporting also the IPoW			
ToS Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management	UNECE	UNECE (RB-staff)	operational
ToS Forest Products and Wood Energy Statistics	UNECE	UNECE (RB-staff)	operational
ToS Sustainable Forest Products	UNECE	UNECE (RB-staff)	operational
ToS Forest Communication	FAO	FAO (XB)	

Sustainable management of forests

Activity	Lead	Organizational Resources allocated	Funding gap
Disturbance and damage	UNECE	UNECE (RB-staff/XB)	operational and expertise
Assessment of forests, forest functions and management	UNECE	UNECE (RB-staff/XB)	operational and expertise

¹ **RB: Regular budget resources**

• ECE: allocated via United Nations [annual] Programme Budget, Part V Regional cooperation for development, Section 20 Economic development in Europe, Programme 17 Economic development in Europe, Subprogramme 7 (activities under COFFI);

• FAO: staff resources at the Joint Office [FAO to provide information].

XB: Extra-budgetary resources

• ECE: allocated via project funds from donors - national governments (EXCOM approved).

Funding gap – Extra-budgetary funding required (not secured)

Data and Information

Activity	Lead	Organizational resources allocated	Funding gap
Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire	UNECE	UNECE (RB)	
Global Forest Resources Assessment (in the UNECE region)	UNECE	FAO, UNECE (RB-staff/XB)	expertise
Joint Wood Energy Enquiry	FAO	FAO (RB-staff), UNECE (RB-staff)	expertise
Pan-European data collection	FAO	FAO (RB staff), UNECE (RB-staff)	

Forest products and services

Activity	Lead	Organizational resources allocated	Funding gap
Bioeconomy and circular economy approaches	FAO	FAO (RB)	
Market Assessments of production, trade and consumption of wood energy and wood products			
Forest Products Annual Market Review	FAO	FAO (RB-staff), UNECE (RB-staff and operational)	expertise
Data briefs	FAO	FAO (RB-staff)	
Market statement	FAO	FAO (RB)	
Other ad hoc mandated assessments	JOINT [tbd.]	FAO (RB-staff), UNECE (RB-staff)	expertise and operational
[Sustainable production and consumption]	JOINT [tbd.]	UNECE (RB-staff/XB), FAO (RB-staff)	expertise and operational

Foresight

Activity	Lead	Organizational resources allocated	Funding gap
Outlook study preparation start (second half of IPoW period)	UNECE or FAO [tbd.]	UNECE and FAO (RB-staff/XB)	expertise and operational

Capacity building

Activity	Lead	Organizational resources allocated	Funding gap
Capacity building activities in support of the implementation of the IPoW	FAO	FAO (RB and XB), UNECE (RB)	operational

Communication and publications

Activity	Lead	Organizational resources allocated	Funding gap
Publications			
Preparation of content	JOINT	UNECE (RB-staff), FAO (RB)	expertise and editing
Language editing	UNECE or FAO	UNECE (RB), FAO (XB)	
Administration	UNECE	UNECE (RB)	
Layout	UNECE	UNECE (RB)	
Printing	UNECE	UNECE (RB)	
Distribution	UNECE	UNECE (RB)	
Translation (if applicable)	UNECE	UNECE (RB)	
[Communication – depending on availability of funding]			

Annex II:

List of Teams of Specialists supporting the implementation of the Integrated Programme of Work 2026-2029

1. The following Teams of Specialists also will support the implementation of the IPoW for the period 2026-2027:
 - (a) Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management (ECE serviced);
 - (b) Team of Specialists on Sustainable Forest Products (ECE serviced);
 - (c) Team of Specialists on Forest Products and Wood Energy Statistics (ECE serviced).
 2. Note: Team of Specialists on Forest Sector Outlook to be relaunched in 2027 to prepare the next forest sector outlook study upon availability of resources.
 3. [Note: The Teams of Specialist on Forest Communication could continue under the global FAO Forest Communicators Network.]
 4. Their terms of reference (TORs) as well as the Guidelines for the COFFI Teams of Specialists are at <https://unece.org/forests/teams-specialists>. ECE's "Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of teams of specialists within UNECE" are linked at (ECE/EX/2/Rev.1). The ToS on Boreal Forests operates under the COFFI Programme of Work.
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