

September 2012



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PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Hundred and Twelfth Session

Rome, 5 - 9 November 2012

Strategic Evaluation of FAO's role and work in forestry

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1. The Programme Committee requested an Evaluation of FAO's role and work in forestry in April 2010,¹ which was initiated in 2011. This cover page provides a summary of the key issues for the attention of the Programme Committee on the attached report *Strategic Evaluation of FAO's role and work in Forestry* and the Management Response

Evaluation report

2. FAO has a comparative advantage in integrated forest management and broader land-use management issues thanks to its global mandate on all aspects related to forests and forestry and to related internal capacities that span land uses in forestry, agriculture and rural development. However, within such a broad vision, the Organization needs to carefully examine and prioritize its efforts and available resources in regards to forestry related topics within the framework of its Members' priorities..

3. Given its strong global mandate on forests, backed by its constituency of COFO and by its Members, and in light of its capacity to tackle sustainable forest management and to integrate forests and forestry in a broad cross-sectoral approach, FAO is well placed to play a lead role in dealing with forests and forestry in a more holistic way, and in improving coordination within the global forestry architecture. Being both a technical and a policy organization, for forests as well as other land uses, FAO can help to shape the role of forests in a wider landscape.

4. The Evaluation envisions a forestry programme for FAO in the future that is more proactive in the international forestry regime, and is focused on a strategic agenda with clear and prioritized areas of work.. Such a programme will capitalize on the main comparative advantages of FAO, pursue enhanced connections between normative products and application in the field in priority areas, and will have a more programmatic approach to field work consistent with the Organization's corporate strategic agenda.

5. The Evaluation Team presents three overarching recommendations containing a total of nine more specific recommendations to FAO for dealing with the major challenges and opportunities discussed in the conclusions. Suggestions are given for the most critical actions needed to implement these recommendations, with specific suggestions dealing with the various thematic areas.

Management Response

6. FAO Management welcomes the findings and recommendations of this Evaluation and accepts 8 out of 9 recommendations and partially accepts one. Management agrees with the four factors identified by the Evaluation that support FAO's role in influencing the global forestry agenda and the fact that the contributions of forestry to achieving the global goals of FAO's Members have not been fully realized or recognized in the past.

7. Management feels that the ongoing process of reviewing FAO's Strategic Framework, which in addressing cross-cutting issues provides the opportunity to strengthen the direct and indirect contributions of forests and trees to the global goals of FAO and its Members, directly responds to the Evaluation's challenge for Members and Management to renew their commitment to better integrating FAO's work in forestry into the main objectives of the Organization..

8. One of the more challenging recommendations of the Evaluation is to "prioritize FAO's programme areas based on its comparative advantages and with guidance from the governing bodies." Management accepts this recommendation, noting that the ongoing review of programme priorities is one of the major tasks for the governing bodies, including COFO and the regional forestry commissions.

Guidance Sought

9. The Programme Committee may wish to provide its views and guidance on the key issues in the Evaluation report, and to the response to the recommendations and proposed follow-up actions by Management.

¹ CL 139/4 <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/018/k7985e.pdf>