



منظمة الأغذية
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Food and
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Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная
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Organización
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para la
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Agricultura

ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY COMMISSION

TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION

Clark Freeport Zone, Pampanga, Philippines, 22-26 February 2016

INPUTS TO FAO GOVERNANCE

SECRETARIAT NOTE

Formulating the agenda for COFO and identifying priorities

1. In response to the recommendations of the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal (IPA) the Committee on Forestry (COFO) has taken several steps to strengthen the internal oversight function of the Committee as an FAO governing body, and to enable the Regional Forestry Commissions (RFCs) to play a more proactive role in providing input to FAO governance through the Committee and the Regional Conferences.
2. To facilitate these functions, a coordination mechanism was introduced in 2011 to enable RFCs to make recommendations to forthcoming sessions of their respective Regional Conferences, for the draft agenda of COFO, and for the priorities for the FAO Forestry programme. As a result, the draft agenda of the COFO sessions was based on these recommendations, and RFC recommendations for programme priorities were presented to COFO in the respective session documents (COFO/2012/9.3 and COFO/2014/7.1). COFO appreciated the input from the RFCs and endorsed their recommendations providing guidance on areas of priority in the context of the Strategic Framework, allowing FAO Forestry work to contribute more effectively to achieving the three global goals of FAO.
3. It has been repeatedly acknowledged that the COFO-RFC interaction provides a unique vehicle for regional-global collaboration and policy and programme coordination. The system has elevated the coordination and the input to FAO governance and program of work and budget (PWB) planning to new levels. While it has been continuously improved on the basis of experiences, the COFO Steering Committee noted the need for and the challenges in prioritizing the rich set of recommendations of the RFCs to avoid an ever expanding list of actions and suggested that the secretariat seek ways for strengthening the system in this regard. Corresponding with the conclusion of the Steering Committee, the Independent Review of the FAO Governance Reform noted that in the absence of proper instruments for exercising an internal oversight function, programme priority discussions in the Technical Committees tend to result in long “shopping lists”.
4. Based on experiences and the guidance from various sources, the following broad recommendations were presented to, and approved by, the COFO Steering Committee:

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- The tables be simplified and less ambitious in terms of describing the implications of the suggested actions. Any recommendation for FAO action should consider the Strategic Framework and the Strategic Objectives as the overarching management framework.
- RFCs should indicate the relative importance of the actions recommended, so that they provide stronger guidance to the secretariat in developing recommendations for the PWB. Furthermore, RFCs may wish to give guidance on areas for reduced emphasis to help keep balance between work programme and budgetary resources.
- RFCs should link their recommendations to those of other Commissions wherever such relationship exists.

5. On this basis the Commission may wish to formulate its recommendations using the following templates:

RFC recommendations for the attention of COFO (Annex 1)

The Commission is invited to indicate topics, suggested actions by COFO (information, discussion or decision), and, as much as possible, the follow up actions expected from COFO and/or FAO. Commissions may also wish to make reference to similar or identical recommendation of other RFCs.

While the set of recommendations is expected to emanate from the Commission's discussions the Executive Committee may wish to be engaged in its formulation early on by developing, in the course of the session, a draft set of recommendation for the Committee's consideration towards the conclusion of the session.

RFC recommendations for the attention of the APCR (Annex 2)

The Commission is invited to identify priority issues for the consideration of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific. While the report of the session as a whole will be presented to the Regional Conference as an information item, the Commission may wish to highlight issues which require specific policy guidance from the Regional Conference, or which are expected to be brought to the attention of other governing bodies, in particular the Council and the Conference, on a track parallel to COFO.

RFC recommendations for the FAO Programme of Work in Forestry related to the agenda of the current session (Annex 3)

6. These recommendations will be compiled by the secretariat, under the guidance of the Executive Committee, from the outcomes of the discussions of the various agenda items, and presented as a complete set for the Commission's final consideration. In order to enhance the priority setting function, the Commission is invited to identify the suggested level of priority (high, medium, low or "for de-emphasis") and give reference to previous priorities (new or continued). The Commission is further invited to indicate the scope of action (regional or global) thereby giving guidance on how and where to include it in the PWB. A reference to the SOs can, but does not necessarily have to, be established during the session. This could also be a task left for subsequent action by the secretariat.

7. In order for the Commission to be able to build more strongly on synergies, the set of recommendations made by other Commissions will be made available as miscellaneous documents prior to the session. The Commission may wish to note in this context the calendar of RFC and Regional Conference sessions:

Commission	Date	Location	RC
Europe (joint with COFFI)	2-6 November 2015	Switzerland	2-5 May 2016
Latin America and Caribbean	9-13 November 2015	Peru	22-26 Feb 2016
Near East	14-18 December 2015	Algeria	18-22 April 2016
North America	12-14 January 2016	Mexico	
Africa	1-5 February 2016	Tanzania	4-8 April 2016
Asia-Pacific	22-26 February 2016	Philippines	7-11 March 2016

Strengthening the focus on the reviewed Strategic Framework

8. FAO's current Strategy for Forests and Forestry ("the Strategy") was adopted by the 19th session of COFO in 2009. The Strategy was developed in the broader context of FAO's vision and Global Goals, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Global Objectives on Forests adopted by the UN General Assembly. The Strategy was foreseen to be a dynamic document with an anticipated timeframe of 10 years and with direct links to the Medium Term Plans (MTP) and the program budget process.

9. Several important developments have taken place since the adoption of the Strategy. Most notably, FAO introduced its reviewed Strategic Framework 2010-2019 and set out truly cross-cutting and interdisciplinary Strategic Objectives (SOs) leading to thinking and taking actions in a cross-sectoral manner with traditional topical boundaries removed. The MDGs were reviewed in 2015 and superseded by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) setting a whole new international development agenda for the post-2015 period. Furthermore, a far-reaching agreement on climate change was agreed in December 2015.

10. These fundamental developments offer an excellent opportunity for reconsidering and strengthening the contribution of forests and forestry to sustainable development and may necessitate the revision of the Strategy so that it fully supports achievement of the Strategic Objectives and strengthens forestry's contribution to achieving the SDGs. A revised Strategy could also help consider FAO's work in forestry in the broader context of the Organization's reviewed Strategic Framework, and focus it on this basis, as requested by COFO and the FAO Conference.

Points for consideration

The Commission may wish to:

- develop its recommendations for the draft agenda of COFO, for the attention of the Regional Conference and for the program priorities for FAO in forestry;
- request the secretariat to share these recommendations with other RFCs;
- recommend to COFO and, through it, to FAO that a revision of the Strategy for Forests and Forestry be initiated.

The Commission may wish to invite the Chairperson of the Regional Conference to give adequate attention to the recommendations of the Commission in the agenda of the Conference.

Annex 1

RFC recommendations for the attention of COFO (issues to be considered for inclusion in the Agenda)

<i>Priority issues for COFO to consider</i>	<i>Expected outcome (information/discussion /decision)</i>	<i>Possible follow up activities for COFO and FAO</i>	<i>Reference to other RFC recommendation</i>

Annex 2

RFC recommendations for the attention of the RC

<i>Priority issues for the RC to consider</i>	<i>Expected outcome (information/discussion /decision)</i>	<i>Possible follow up activities for FAO)</i>

Annex 3

RFC recommendations for the FAO Programme of Work in Forestry related to the agenda of the current session

<i>Area/ action for FAO programme of work</i>	<i>Priority (High, Medium, Low, De-emphasis)</i>	<i>Type (new, continued,</i>	<i>Level of action (sub-regional/ regional/global)</i>	<i>Strategic Objective (1-5)</i>

This table is expected to be pre-filled during the session by the secretariat. It should summarize actions recommended by the Commission in discussing the various agenda items.

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