21 Session of the COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

STRATEGIC EVALUATION OF
FAO’s ROLE AND WORK IN FORESTRY

Report of the OED External Evaluation Team (EET)

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I. Methodology

- **Evaluation framework**
  - Focus on SOE and 6 Organizational Results
  - Normative and operational work
  - Institutional arrangements
  - Partnerships

- **“Evidence-based” findings and conclusions**
  - Included also an assessment of macro-trends in forestry

- **Thorough methodological framework (OED)**
  - Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability
  - Organization of work
II. SELECTED FINDINGS (1)

STRATEGY AND GOVERNING ARRANGEMENTS

- SOE and organizational results difficult to translate into actions
- Program less strategic, fragmented and rather demand (resources) driven
  → emphasis affected by voluntary contributions (not FO specific)
- COFO relevant for FO priority setting, ... but actions often defined beyond COFO (from “wish list” to “cherry picking”), see 62-79

CAPACITIES AND OUTREACH

- Qualified professional staff, but often working in isolation
- Potential to improve working relationships at all levels
- Potential to improve two-way flow communication and knowledge exchange
II. SELECTED FINDINGS (2)
THEMATIC WORKING AREAS

Global policy and processes
- Weak global forest policy arrangements... but FAO visible
- New players set new agendas and processes
- Potential to shape regional level policies not fully tapped

National forest policy and forest governance
- Generally well focused in terms of policy issues
- Major donor programs drive work (NFP Facility, ACP-FLEGT)
- Field programmes often scattered, ad hoc, not prioritized and disconnected from the global agenda
- Lack of long-term vision in many country programs (opportunity driven mandates and projects)
II. Selected Findings (3)

Thematic Working Areas

- **Forest Resources Assessment**
  - Effective and efficient delivery (FRA, NFMA, MRV Carbon), .... but need to improve in (data) quality and transparency

- **Forest Resources Management**
  - Last remaining “Knowledge baskets” (biophysical, social) ..but spread too thin, under-resourced and often isolated

- **Forest Products and Economics**
  - Global forest statistics performing well through good partnerships, low visibility in forest industries and economics
II. SELECTED FINDINGS (4)  
THEMATIC WORKING AREAS

Cross-cutting themes

- Watershed management, agro-forestry, peri-urban forestry → important cross-sectoral fields, but understaffed and insufficiently resourced
- Climate change → well resourced (in REDD+/MRV) but more holistic cross-unit approach and leadership needed

- Social inclusion → forest in poverty alleviation prominent in the work agenda, social groups that may most require assistance generally not targeted
- Gender aspects not explicitly and systematically included in operational and normative work.
III. CONCLUSIONS (1)

LINKING STRATEGY TO IMPLEMENTATION

- **SOE** and organizational results reflect a forest-centric approach (does not help to break silo mentality)

- **SOE** not sufficiently linked to a core FAO comparative advantage, cross-sectoral work/landscape approach

- More focus needed on regional approaches and strategic support at country level

- FAO being more strategic and effective in:
  - its leadership role in dealing holistically with forests in the international forest regime;
  - strengthening its role and responsibilities in the assessment and monitoring of forests; and
  - developing the broader role of forests in climate change adaptation and REDD+
III. CONCLUSIONS (2)

OPTIMIZING FAO’S UNIQUE MANDATE

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Uniqueeness of FAO Forestry Programme itself, through:
- Its inclusive governance structure (COFO, RCs, RFCs, ...)
- Its resources and information service (FRA, SOFO, FORSTAT...)
- Its technical capacities and know-how (policy, SFM)
- Its presence at global level, in regions and countries

Under one roof is the expertise to deal with most land uses and related water and other natural resources management challenges and opportunities

Expertise and capacity to address landscape management, in particular deforestation and agricultural/livestock/ bioenergy production
Convening power is still there, needs to be set into perspective: Better communication of FAO’s unique position and strategic orientation is key.

FAO needs to accept that it cannot do everything and there are new and other institutions (and partners) that can do the job. FAO should:

- Lead in some areas (where it can over more than others)
- Work jointly with others in some areas
- Leave some areas for others to do.
- E.g. Areas with high potential to collaborate with others: Forest Resources Management and Forest Products and Economics
IV. THE WAY FORWARD (1)

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS TO FAO

- Adopt a holistic approach to forests and tree outside forests to directly contribute to meeting all the strategic objectives of FAO and its members
  - Focus on the overall role of FAO (food security, poverty alleviation, sustainable use of NR – the MDGs)

- In close partnership with others, be more proactive and strategic in positioning forests and forestry in the global change agenda
  - A global leadership role in forests & forestry is needed more than ever; and FAO is a logical entity to fill such a role, in partnership with other key entities.

- Strengthen modalities for linking knowledge and expertise on forestry across the organization, including global, regional and national levels
  - Address efficiency and effectiveness to deal with forests and land-use within the organization and with countries and priority partners.
IV. THE WAY FORWARD (2)

**COFO MEMBERS AND FAO TO RECOGNIZE...**

- FAO’s unique position to deal with sustainable land and other natural resources management and use **overall**, including where forests are a central component.

- FAO’s comparative advantage in being both a **technical and a policy organization** (and the only one in forestry).

- FAO’s **need and ambition** to be strategic rather than opportunity driven (the former is needed to remain relevant).

- FAO’s need for a **more rational base for regular funding** (not becoming an implementing agency for various interests with resources).
V. SUMMING IT UP

The FAO Forestry Programme is alive and well.

But it can contribute much more in terms of helping member countries deal with the forest-related land and other natural resources challenges and opportunities facing them in their quest for improved food security, poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.

To realize these greater contributions, FAO as a whole, Members, and Donors need to think and act more holistically and synergistically and focus on those forest-related programmes that (1) best can contribute to all basic goals of FAO and its members, and (2) take advantage of FAO’s unique comparative advantages.

THANK YOU!