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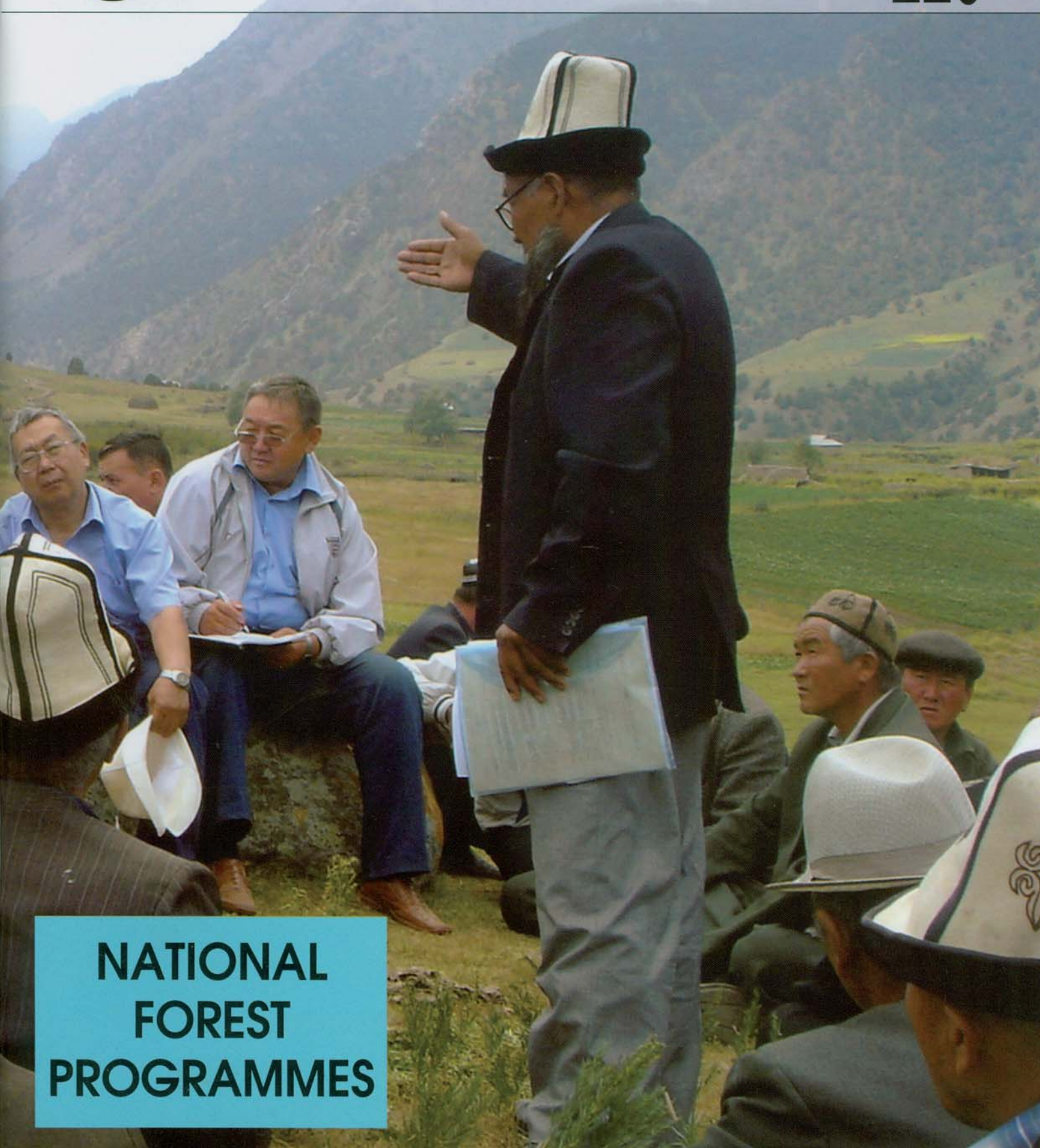
Food and Agriculture
Organization
of the United Nations

An international journal
of forestry and forest
industries

Vol. 57

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225



**NATIONAL
FOREST
PROGRAMMES**



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Cover photo: A planning discussion among foresters, scientists and village representatives, Kyrgyzstan (see article, page 15)
I. Kouplevatskaya

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National forest programmes

The term “national forest programme” (NFP) designates the wide range of approaches to the process of planning, programming and implementing forest activities in a country, to be applied at national and subnational levels, based on a common set of guiding principles. One of the main achievements of the international dialogue on forests since the 1990s has been the common agreement among participants that every country should develop an NFP to lead and steer its forest policy development and implementation processes in a participatory and intersectoral way, integrating it into wider programmes for sustainable land use, socio-economic development and poverty reduction.

The purpose of NFPs is to establish a workable social and political framework for the conservation, management and sustainable development of all types of forests, which in turn will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of public and private operations and funding, as well as forests’ contributions to sustainable livelihoods. An NFP comprises not only policies, strategies and courses of action, but also mechanisms for their implementation, monitoring and evaluation. A good information base – from national forest inventories and sector studies, for example – has an important role in an effective NFP.

This issue of *Unasylva* gives examples of how some countries have approached their NFP process, with the conviction that others can learn from the successes and the challenges – keeping in mind that NFPs will necessarily vary according to a country’s socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental situation.

The issue opens with some reflections from J. Heino, leader of FAO’s Forestry Department, on why NFPs are so important, and how FAO supports them. Next, C. Sepp and E. Mansur give an overview of national forest programme principles and process: the iterative phases involved in their development, and the participatory arrangements that are their hallmark. Concrete examples are in the articles that follow.

The case of Kyrgyzstan is a particular one, because economic and political transition provided an opportunity for a complete overhaul of forest policy. I. Kouplevatskaya describes the creation of the national forest programme as an element of the wider reform process which has emphasized participation and democratic governance.

Participation by all forest stakeholders is one of the guiding principles of NFPs. Efforts in the Philippines have emphasized the use of appropriate methods to ensure meaningful participation of villagers in the policy process. P. O’Hara

and J. Pulhin draw some lessons from such initiatives, with a focus on participatory methods and how they help forge new relationships among stakeholders.

One means of expanding participation in the policy process is to use the Internet. Online stakeholder consultation was a novel feature in the development of Canada’s National Forest Strategy 2003–2008. J. Cinq-Mars draws some lessons from this early experience and looks towards wider use of this and other new information and communication technologies in the future.

Guatemala’s NFP focuses on policy dialogue not only at the national level, but also at the subnational level. In describing the country’s NFP process, E. Oliva Hurtarte, E. Sales Hernández and I. Bustos García highlight the Forest Policy Round Tables in the country’s nine forest regions – autonomous discussion groups made up of central government and local authorities, non-governmental organizations, civil-society bodies and private companies, which provide feedback to the NFP.

Two articles examine regional initiatives for strengthening NFPs as a bridge between the national and international levels. W. Thies, J. Rodríguez and E. von Pfeil describe the Puenbo process, an initiative that is strengthening the forest policy dialogue in Latin America and the Caribbean. In Central Africa (article by J.P. Koyo and R. Foteu), the Convergence Plan of the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC) provides a framework for harmonizing forest policies and programmes and also serves as a basis for the formulation of NFPs.

In Senegal, sweeping reforms carried out in the 1990s introduced a decentralized administrative structure, shifting forest management responsibilities to subnational institutions and communities. As described by O. Diaw, the NFP emphasizes capacity building within this decentralized institutional framework, for effective implementation of programmes to curb desertification, deforestation, forest and soil degradation and biodiversity loss, while also targeting livelihood support and poverty reduction.

Finally, S. Geller and R. McConnell examine how countries can link their national forest programmes and poverty reduction strategies to strengthen financial, institutional and policy support for forest-based poverty alleviation – and thus enhance the role of forestry in achieving national poverty reduction goals.

This issue of *Unasylva* celebrates the fifth anniversary of the National Forest Programme Facility (see page 13), an innovative partnership arrangement that has been helping countries develop and implement their national forest programmes. Most of the experiences recounted in this issue had a link with the Facility – which now embarks on its second phase.

We hope that the sample of experiences presented here will provide inspiration to the more than 130 countries – developing and developed – that are now in some stage of planning or implementing NFPs, and will encourage many more to do so.

National forest programmes: what FAO can do

J. Heino

How FAO supports national forest programmes – tools enabling any country to create a national vision and long-term strategy for its forest sector.

National forest programmes (NFPs) have a vast potential to serve country-specific needs in the forest sector. They are much more than mere documents. Good examples show that they are vigorously functioning forest policy formulation processes.

The concept of a national forest programme can be expressed rather simply: it is a tool enabling any country to create a national vision and long-term strategy for its forest sector. In practice, however, there are many challenges in developing and implementing NFPs that provide real value. Prerequisites for a successful outcome include accurate inventory and assessment data, state-of-the-art analysis of the forest sector, participatory programme formulation within the forest sector and with all relevant interacting sectors, and processes for implementing and monitoring progress (see article by Sepp and Mansur in this issue).

NFP formulation and implementation is and should be led by governments in participatory processes. Responsibilities for implementation and follow-up should be incorporated into the work of a wide range of players within the forest sector, and also delegated to adjacent sectors and relevant stakeholders. The governmental lead role underscores the need for political commitment.

NFPs have been successfully used above all as frameworks for participatory policy formulation and implementation. Their success can be often explained by the fact that they combine the interests of many stakeholders. Even if unanimity might be difficult to reach, the consensus-building effect of a participatory approach is often important for implementation.

Efforts to induce representatives from other sectors to participate usually promotes integration of forestry with other sectors, an effect that is often underestimated. Creation of NFPs may also help forestry obtain adequate recognition in other national programmes and strategies, notably those developed to reduce poverty.

FAO'S ROLE

One of FAO's key tasks is to provide technical and financial support to countries, especially developing countries and those in transition, for formulating and implementing viable NFPs. FAO views NFPs as basic tools enabling countries to formulate their own forest sector goals independently. FAO assists countries in gathering and managing forest-related information needed for policy formulation in NFPs, and makes this information available at the global level through statistical databases, forest resources assessments and forest-sector outlook studies.

The Organization's mandate and constituency facilitate interaction with and among national authorities responsible for policy development and implementation. FAO hosts the National Forest Programme Facility, a multidonor mechanism in support of NFPs worldwide (see page 13). A recent independent mid-term evaluation of the Facility confirmed its usefulness as a mechanism for supporting countries in specific NFP implementation tasks. Collaboration between FAO and the Facility creates synergies, for example in capacity building for planning and implementing NFPs.

FAO is in a position to support capacity

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building in many ways to enhance NFPs. One of the Organization's tasks is to offer broad technical expertise in subject areas that constitute important elements of NFP development and implementation; examples include participatory processes, financial mechanisms for sustainable forest management, forest law enforcement, conflict management and intersectoral approaches. FAO also helps countries ensure that their NFPs are in line with international commitments.

As a neutral facilitator, FAO helps build consensus and promotes appropriate, mutually beneficial partnerships. As the

chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) – a partnership of 14 forest-related international organizations, institutions and convention secretariats created to enhance cooperation and coordination on forest issues – FAO encourages partnership agreements among key institutions involved in the forest policy debate at the global level.

Finally, FAO supports implementation of a wide range of field projects related to NFPs, based on the requests of member countries. Improving forest assessment methods, forest management practices, forest law enforcement strategies, fire

management and forestry education are just a few examples of field-level assistance linked to NFPs.

Thus virtually every member country has benefited directly or indirectly from FAO support to national forest programmes. Although it is difficult to measure the magnitude of the support, the Map provides some highlights.

FAO'S CONTRIBUTION WILL CONTINUE

Requests from countries for additional assistance in initiating and implementing NFPs vastly exceed the Organi-

In 2004, **Mexico** provided funding for FAO assistance in carrying out a participatory revision of the country's strategic programme for forestry (Programa Estratégico Forestal 2025) and national forest plan.

Since 2001 FAO – with financial support from Finland – has been helping **Serbia** develop a new forest policy and legal and institutional framework to assist the country in its efforts to enter the European Union.

FAO, through FNPP and the NFP Facility, is assisting **Mali** to develop an incentive policy to promote integrated land use through participatory and decentralized natural resource management. A forest policy and amendments to existing forest legislation are under development to support the transfer of forest management rights to local populations.

With TCP support, from 2004 to 2006 key stakeholders in **El Salvador** have developed a national strategic plan for forestry (Estrategia Forestal Salvadoreña) to provide guidance for the sector's development in the next decade, as well as financial mechanisms for its implementation.

FAO, together with the World Bank, helped **Liberia** draft its first forest policy, capped by a new forestry law signed in October 2006. The new policy recognizes the importance of community involvement in forestry, good governance and more equitable access to forest resources.

The forestry component of the FAO/Netherlands Partnership Programme (FNPP) since 2001 has supported capacity-building with an emphasis on poverty alleviation and increased stakeholder participation in decision-making. FNPP supports the development of national forest policies and legislation and harmonization at the regional level. A key aim is to ensure that national forest programmes are integrated with national poverty reduction strategies and national biodiversity action plans.

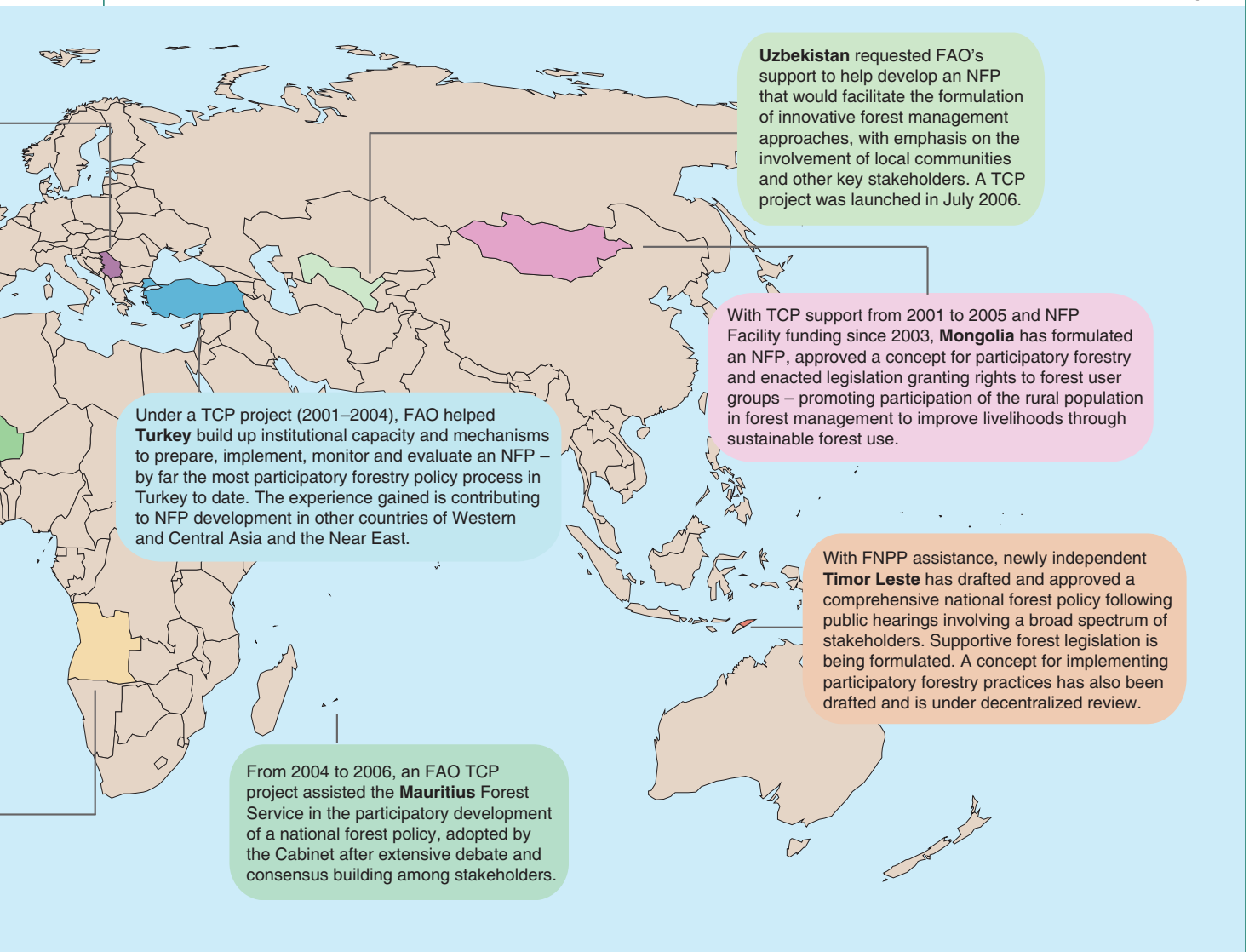
Through FNPP, FAO has been assisting **Angola** since 2005 in the development of new policy and legislation for forests, wildlife and protected areas. As one of the first participatory policy development exercises in postwar Angola, it provides a model for other areas, e.g. a participatory food security strategy will use the same participatory methodology.

zation's present resource limits. The budgetary outlook within FAO's regular programme of work foresees little possibility for expansion; hence, any strengthening of NFP support has to be based on extrabudgetary funding. In this respect I would like to recognize the long-term commitment of some donor countries for this very purpose, especially Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as the European Union.

FAO is working hard to promote more

integration within the Organization, with partner institutions and in member countries in support of NFPs. The aim is to contribute effectively to the development of NFPs that are genuinely built on the principles of country leadership; consistency within the forest sector and integration with other sectors; and partnerships and the participation of all actors. Countries and partners are invited to join us in efforts to further increase our assistance to countries to create high-quality NFPs. ♦

**FAO support to NFPs:
some recent examples**



National forest programmes – a comprehensive framework for participatory planning

C. Sepp and E. Mansur

An overview of the guiding principles, iterative phases and participatory arrangements that set national forest programmes apart.

Planning frameworks are alluring. Results are often easy to obtain, namely a good plan based on sector analysis. Most organizations are well experienced in this. However, the assumption that a good plan automatically leads to good implementation can sometimes be an illusion.

The forest sector has seen a number of such planning frameworks. As early as the 1960s, interventions in forest-sector policy planning were considered worthwhile. In the following decades, many standardized planning frameworks were developed to rationalize planning and put forestry development on a more strategic track, such as the Tropical Forestry Action Programme (TFAP), national forestry action plans (NFAPs) and master plans.

Without a doubt, these frameworks were able to raise awareness on forest issues, to foster some international support for forest-sector development and to put forestry on the political agenda. Ensuing debates ignited the international dialogue on forestry and contributed to later agreements and follow-up processes arising from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992.

However, these frameworks, with their strictly sectoral approach to forest development, could not address those external causes of global deforestation that are beyond the reach of foresters. Furthermore, as they emphasized planning and failed to pay adequate attention to practical implementation at the national and local levels, they were not able to achieve the desired impacts.

Some national plans incurred frustra-

tion when the need to comply with externally prescribed procedures led to the consumption of scarce resources. Others tempted governments into hyperactivity of ambitious planning, while questions of implementation were postponed. Some of the plans led to voluminous lists of projects which later remained unaddressed because the planning did not take into account the limited financial resources of the countries or the preferences of the donors. Furthermore, planning was often felt to be donor driven or imposed from outside, with little country leadership. In some cases, a top-down planning approach dominated the agenda. A need for broader policy and institutional reforms was not adequately addressed; often, in NFAPs, isolated projects came to dominate over the establishment of strong institutional capacity and cross-sectoral links.

Lack of ownership of the process, a too-narrow sectoral approach and insufficient participation of the different – and often conflicting – stakeholders appeared to be the most important constraints.

Despite these difficulties, the underlying concept of promoting comprehensive forest policy frameworks at the national level continued to hold interest. The subsequent international forest policy dialogue considered the lessons learned from previous frameworks.

HOW ARE NFPs DIFFERENT?

UNCED brought a change in approach. Chapter 11 of Agenda 21 (“Combating deforestation”) (UN, 1992a) and the so-called “Forest principles” (UN, 1992b) favoured holistic approaches applying to all types of forests in all countries for

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National forest programmes encourage not only partnerships in the forest sector, but also consideration of other sectors (a farming family, Bolivia)

future forest-related programmes. This viewpoint strongly stressed implementation and encouraged consideration of other sectors as well as pluralistic partnerships in the forest sector (i.e. multiple models of ownership and management, plurality of service providers, diversity of administrative bodies, multilateral decision-making).

With many unresolved issues remaining after UNCED, the forest policy dialogue to develop an international consensus on national mechanisms for sustainable forest management continued through the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and later the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). The IPF/IFF process elaborated 270 Proposals for Action and considered national forest programmes as the most important tools for implementing these proposals at the country level (see Box; page 8). IFF recommended that countries conduct a systematic national assessment of the Proposals for Action involving all stakeholders and plan for their implementation within country-specific national forest programmes (ECOSOC, 2000). These programmes needed to be flexible

and dynamic for application in widely differing political, socio-economic and environmental national contexts.

NFPs share the background objectives of earlier planning frameworks such as TFAP in that they are intended to help promote coordination, policy coherence and efficiency. They are intended to facilitate, locally, the establishment of consistent long-term forest and forest-related policies in a country.

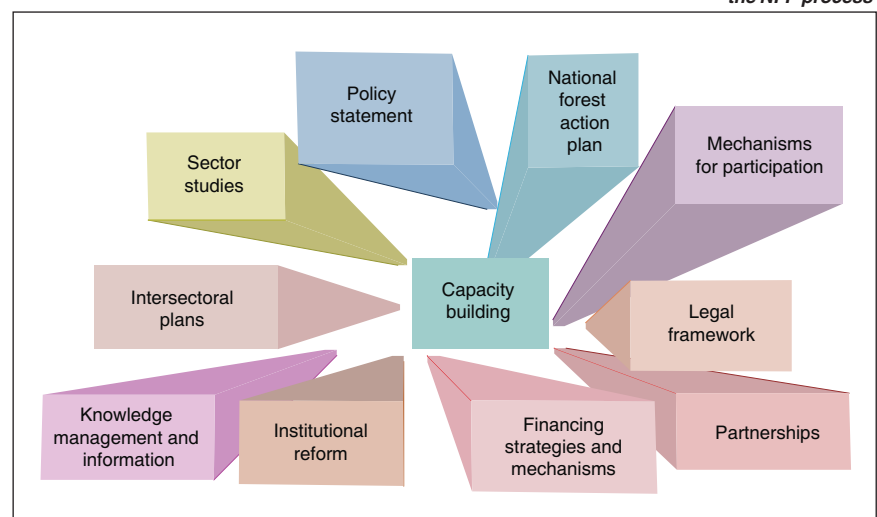
Instead of being donor driven, the NFP concept stresses national sovereignty in defining policy objectives and priorities, and establishes a consultative framework

for stakeholder participation, implementation and monitoring. As such, NFPs reflect a global consensus on how forests ought to be managed and developed, yet without being embedded in any legally binding instrument. The concept explicitly pertains to all countries and to all types of forest in tropical, subtropical and temperate areas.

If it were only for this difference in origin and scope, NFPs might pass as just another revised version of something already familiar. Yet several characteristics make them different:

- **Process orientation.** An NFP is not a mere document but a participatory process with defined outputs. It is an iterative, long-term process, composed of various elements, including the country policy and legal framework related to forests, participation mechanisms, capacity-building initiatives and others (see Figure 1). The NFP provides for learning cycles which allow experiences to be shared and for lessons to be learned in order to fine-tune the process. The active call for feedback from stakeholders makes NFPs dynamic, adaptive and negotiable.

1
Some elements of the NFP process



IPF and national forest programmes

The first Proposals for Action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF), which appeared in the IPF final report in 1997, established guidelines for national forest programmes which have helped to guide countries in the subsequent ten years. The relevant IPF proposals are reproduced here.

The Panel:

- (a) encouraged countries, in accordance with their national sovereignty, specific country conditions and national legislation, to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate national forest programmes, which include a wide range of approaches for sustainable forest management, taking into consideration the following: consistency with national, sub-national or local policies and strategies, and – as appropriate - international agreements; partnership and participatory mechanisms to involve interested parties; recognition and respect for customary and traditional rights of, *inter alia*, indigenous people and local communities; secure land tenure arrangements; holistic, intersectoral and iterative approaches; ecosystem approaches that integrate the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources; and adequate provision and valuation of forest goods and services;
- (b) called for improved cooperation in

support of the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, and urged all countries to use national forest programmes, as appropriate, as a basis for international cooperation in the forest sector;

(c) stressed the need for international cooperation in the adequate provision of ODA, as well as possible new and additional funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other appropriate innovative sources of finance for the effective development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national forest programmes;

(d) encouraged countries to integrate suitable criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, as appropriate, into the overall process of the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national forest programmes, on a step-by-step basis;

(e) urged countries to develop, test and implement appropriate participatory mechanisms for integrating timely and continuous multidisciplinary research into all stages of the planning cycle;

(f) encouraged countries to elaborate systems, including private and community forest management systems, for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating national forest programmes that identify and involve,

where appropriate, a broad participation of indigenous people, forest dwellers, forest owners and local communities in meaningful decision-making regarding the management of state forest lands in their proximity, within the context of national laws and legislation;

(g) urged countries, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to include capacity-building as an objective of national forest programmes, paying particular attention to training, extension services and technology transfer and financial assistance from developed countries, taking due account of local traditional forest-related knowledge;

(h) encouraged countries to establish sound national coordination mechanisms or strategies among all interested parties, based on consensus-building principles, to promote the implementation of national forest programmes;

(i) encouraged countries to further develop the concept and practice of partnership, which could include partnership agreements, in the implementation of national forest programmes, as one of the potential approaches for improved coordination and cooperation between all national and international partners.

Source: ECOSOC, 1997

- **Comprehensiveness.** NFPs provide not only for forest policy development and planning but also for their implementation on the ground. They are intended to promote participatory implementation where the results of agreed objectives, policies and strategies for sustainable forest management are translated into specific actions developed by the stakeholders.

- **Inclusiveness.** An NFP is not additional or parallel to other exercises. It seeks to integrate and harmonize

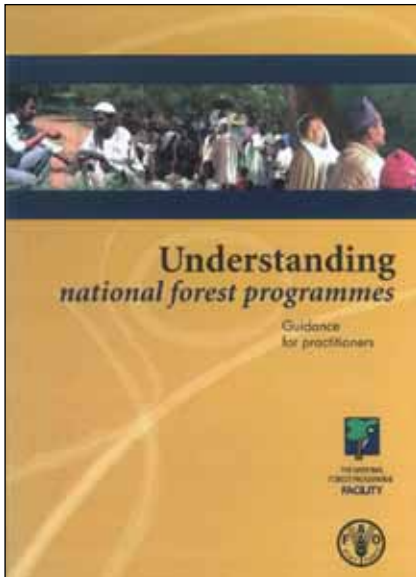
existing activities – plans, policies, legislation – directed towards sustainable forest management. Any of these can be the starting point for an NFP, and each country will need to find its own.

- **Breadth.** The NFP concept goes beyond technical forestry matters in that it is intrinsically linked with matters of good governance. Forest destruction often stems from political issues. Forest issues are closely linked with issues of land tenure, subsistence

use and access rights, and in forest management related conflicts tend to surface. This means that addressing forest issues through an NFP (e.g. with the aim to reconcile access rights of the population, the private sector and the State) can be a viable solution for other underlying conflicts too.

PRINCIPLES – THE BACKBONE OF THE CONCEPT

NFP development is an open-ended, country-driven and adaptive process,



The new publication *Understanding national forest programmes from FAO and the National Forest Programme Facility provides detailed information on NFP principles, activities, instruments and benchmarks*

with no common recipe. Practitioners who want to implement the NFP concept are assisted only by a set of guiding principles that provide orientation on how to conduct the process. These principles derive from the discussions and negotiations of IPF (ECOSOC, 1997); as negotiated text, they lack precision, sometimes overlap, and are thus difficult for NFP practitioners and implementers to apply directly.

The new publication *Understanding national forest programmes* (FAO and National Forest Programme Facility, 2006) provides detailed information on what these principles mean and why they are important, the activities that can be used to implement them, the instruments that can be used in each phase of the process to ensure that they are observed, and how progress can be measured. An innovation introduced to facilitate understanding and use of the principles is their clustering into three groups (see Figure 2).

Cluster 1: Sovereignty and country leadership

In the NFP context national sovereignty means that States have an acknowledged right to manage and use the forests in accordance with their own policies. However, countries have made an international commitment to use forest resources sustainably and without harming other States or jeopardizing the common heritage of humankind or the development options of future generations. National sovereignty is closely related to country leadership and political will, which means that the country assumes full responsibility for the preparation and implementation of an NFP.

To gain political attention and commitment, it is important to demonstrate the contribution of forestry to development and poverty alleviation. Valuation and accounting of forest products and services, combined with adequate financial mechanisms to promote NFP implementation, and lobbying at all levels (international, national, subnational and local) are means to this end.

Progress in approaching the principle of national sovereignty and country leadership can be measured by:

- the existence of a well disseminated, officially adopted and broadly accepted policy statement on forests;
- the existence of an appropriate institutional framework under the aus-

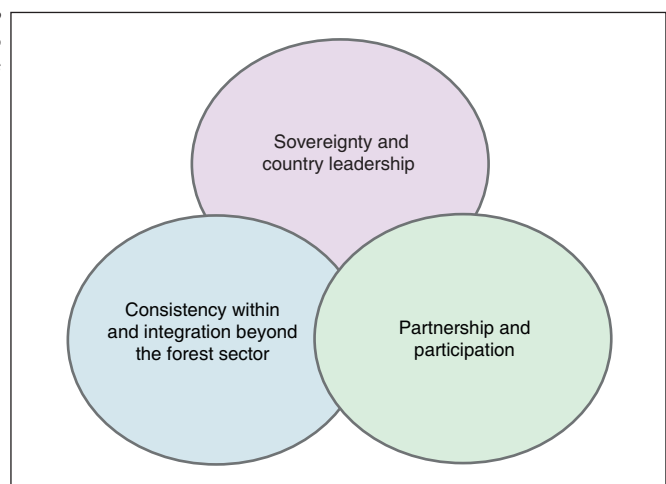
pices of national institutions, including interministerial or interinstitutional coordination mechanisms;

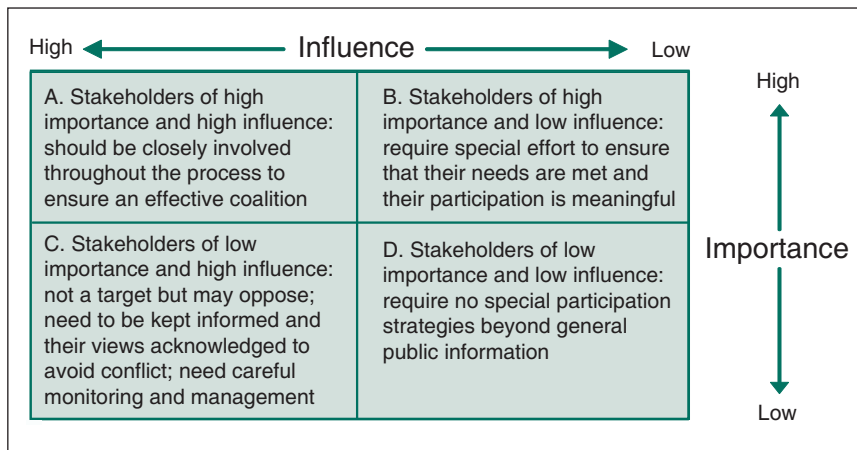
- human resources and finance allocated from the country's budget to the forest sector and for sustainable forest management;
- provisions for capacity building for the different stakeholders to participate effectively in NFP development;
- the quality and effectiveness of donor coordination under the leadership of a national institution;
- the country's representation in the international forest debate and the significance of its contributions to it.

Cluster 2: Consistency within and integration beyond the forest sector

To seek consistency within the forest sector means to foster synergies and to minimize contradictions in policies and negative impacts on forests through their implementation. For example, if royalties are set low, trees are treated as a low-value resource. This is incompatible with the objective that the forest sector should contribute significantly to gross domestic product (GDP). Furthermore, exceptionally low pricing of produce from State forests distorts the market for forest products and may put private forest enterprises at a disadvantage.

2
Clustering the NFP principles





3
Model for identifying the influence and importance of forest stakeholder groups and facilitating their appropriate level of involvement in the NFP

interested stakeholders is to identify and categorize stakeholders according to their influence and importance in the process, and identify the adequate level of participation and accompanying measures for involving them (see Figure 3).

The principle of consistency within the sector also involves recognition of customary laws, traditional rights and traditional forest-related knowledge.

Integration beyond the sector is relevant because forests serve various functions affecting other sectors (e.g. erosion control, water infiltration, biodiversity conservation, combating desertification) and provide goods (fruits, medicine) which serve other sectors and/or overarching development goals (poverty reduction, sustainable development). Furthermore, many factors contributing to forest degradation and deforestation originate outside the forest sector, such as conversion of forests into farmland or settlements, overgrazing or unchecked wildfires, infrastructure development (roads, dams, canals, etc.), energy generation and mining. It is necessary to seek coherence in the policies of different sectors and in their implementation to avoid negative impacts on forests. Often compromises have to be reached.

Forests also have an important place in multilateral environmental agreements, and forest-related measures often contribute to the objectives of several conventions.

Activities that can help fulfil the principles in this cluster and at the same time measure progress include:

- functional analysis of the role of forest resources for different stakeholders and sectors;

- compilation and analysis of relevant laws and regulations;
- application of an integrated ecosystem and landscape approach in which all functions of a given forest site are perceived in their relation to the landscape or ecosystem;
- introduction of cross-sectoral financing strategies for NFP activities, including transfer payments from one sector to another for products or services provided (e.g. payment for environmental services);
- recognition and support of the national forest policy in the action plans of the multilateral environmental agreements to which the country is signatory (e.g. in the national biodiversity strategy);
- representation and active participation of stakeholder groups of other sectors in forest coordination mechanisms.

Cluster 3: Participation and partnership

Stakeholders in forestry are all those who depend on or benefit from forest resources, or who decide on control of or regulate access to forests. Participation requires a certain degree of organization and capacity and is therefore mostly in the hands of organized interest groups. They may participate in NFPs in various ways: directly or indirectly, actively or passively, in supporting or opposing roles.

A first step to enhance participation of

To have impact on the ground, participatory planning has to result in combined action. Partnerships may exist or be fostered at the regional, national or sub-national level (ministries, government agencies, donors, NGOs, private sector, lobby groups, local authorities, forest and other sector agencies, forest owners, traditional communities, community-based organizations, State enterprises). They are voluntary arrangements and can be either informal or binding (e.g. memoranda of agreement).

The success of stakeholder participation can be gauged by:

- the existence of mechanisms for participation that stakeholders can easily access;
- the degree of stakeholder organization for participation in the NFP process, which indicates empowerment and use of the stakeholder potential;
- the continuity of attendance and participation of stakeholders, which is a measure of interest in and ownership of the process;
- empowerment of disadvantaged groups, preventing any single group of stakeholders from monopolizing the process;
- the dissemination of adequate information by and for all stakeholders, presented in accessible language and through suitable media, adapted for different groups as appropriate;

Typical outputs for each phase of the NFP process

Analysis

- Sector review (assessment of the forest sector and its interrelations with other sectors)
- Stakeholders identified, as well as their roles and responsibilities

Policy formulation and planning

- An adopted national forest statement, detailing the political commitment to sustainable forest management as a contribution to sustainable development
- Established platform for stakeholder dialogue and participation
- Objectives and strategies for the forest sector, including a financing strategy for sustainable forest management
- Action plans and investment programmes for the implementation of the agreed measures in place
- Capacity building and information strategy in place

Implementation

- Political, legal and institutional reforms, both within and outside the forest sector
- Information and knowledge management systems
- National and international partnership arrangements and joint activities

Monitoring and evaluation

- Monitoring and evaluation reports/documentation
- Analysis and reflection for learning and adjustments to the process

- the extent to which stakeholder consultations reach consensus, and the stability of consensus;
- growing capacity, political consciousness and interest, and active involvement of stakeholders at various levels.

NFP PHASES AND RELATED OUTPUTS

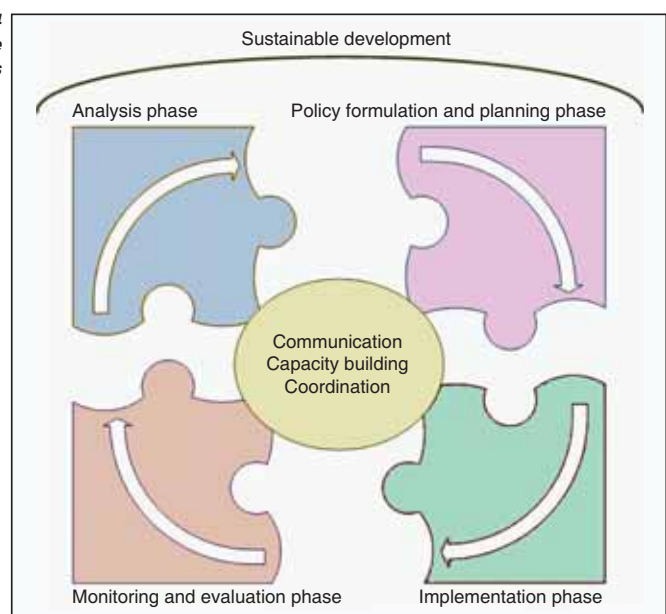
NFPs typically advance in a sequence of phases that can be continuously repeated in evolving cycles of learning and adaptation from experience (Figure 4). These phases – analysis, policy formulation and planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation – are intended to help the NFP practitioner map the NFP process in the country, as well as to assist in the identification and targeting of definite outputs. Examples of typical outputs for each phase are given in the Box above.

The NFP principles are closely related and can be similarly applied in the different phases. Stakeholder participation, for instance, helps build a multifaceted and convincing argument for consistency within the forest sector. Thus participation and partnerships are instrumental for ensuring adequate consideration of forest conservation and sustainable forest use in a country's political process. In turn, if an NFP succeeds in raising the forest sector's profile and winning support for it in national politics (which is another precondition for sovereignty and country leadership), this is a strong indication of successful participation.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR NFP DEVELOPMENT

Suitable arrangements for negotiating NFP issues are at the core of the NFP, as they make it possible to embed national sovereignty and ownership, intra- and intersectoral consistency and participation in the process. In Uganda, for example, negotiations are carried out through a national stakeholders' forum which serves as a platform for political discourse and consensus building. Other types of arrangement include the forest council, steering committee or board

4
Phases of the
NFP process



mandated to oversee and guide the NFP process, on which all key stakeholder groups are represented.

A permanent secretariat and information clearing-house should also be provided. Mechanisms for information exchange among stakeholders, including those from other sectors, about the role of forests in the national economy as well as about intra- and intersectoral dependencies and impacts need to be in place through all NFP phases.

To assume leadership of an NFP in a meaningful and efficient way, national and subnational institutions (including non-governmental stakeholders) may need capacity building at the outset.

NFPs – A PROMISING APPROACH

By virtue of their principles and arrangements, NFPs differ from and are more promising than previous frameworks for strategic planning in forestry. Why more promising? Because, most importantly, their conception and design deliberately addresses the difficulties in country leadership, consensus building, multipurpose management, cross-sectoral cooperation, joint implementation and sustainability that were bottlenecks of previous planning frameworks.

Today, national forest programme principles are a common framework for internationally supported forest-sector policy development. Countries take them into account according to their specific needs.

NFPs work best in countries that have decentralized governance, public consultation and democratic participation. Yet where these are weak or lacking, NFPs may play the part of pacemaker stimulating better forest governance and sustainability. In this capacity NFPs leave previous forest policy instruments behind and have opened up a new chapter in forest-related interventions. ♦



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Five years of the National Forest Programme Facility



The closure of the first five-year phase of the National Forest Programme Facility provides an occasion for reflection on how much this innovative partnership has accomplished in its short lifetime.

Founded in 2002 to help countries develop and implement national forest programmes (NFPs), the Facility seeks to help countries ensure that their NFPs effectively address local needs and national priorities through informed participation of civil society, while also reflecting internationally agreed principles. Its support is directed towards:

- building consensus on how to address forest related issues at the national level;
- integrating sustainable forest management into broader intersectoral processes, with a focus on poverty reduction;
- translating commitments at the international level into national forest policy and planning.

The Facility operates under the authority of a Steering Committee and is financed through a multidonor trust fund supported by the European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. France, Germany and Japan provide in-kind support.

Most of the Facility funds go to country support to enable government and civil society actors to successfully manage and develop their NFP processes. The Facility's trademark is to provide grants directly to stakeholders in partner countries based on a purely country-driven programme of activities and a competitive and transparent process for soliciting

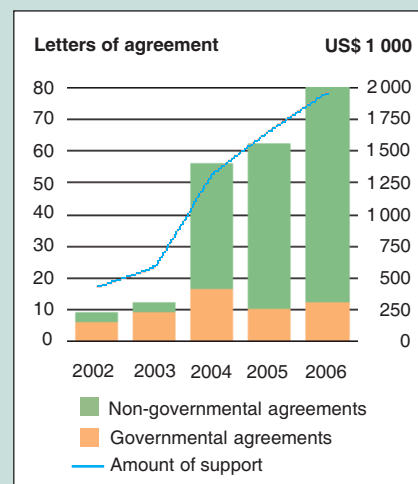
and selecting proposals for support. Catalytic funding supports capacity-building activities such as workshops and in-service training, policy analysis, and information sharing and knowledge management initiatives.

The Facility has now 46 partners including 21 African countries, nine countries in Asia and the Pacific, nine countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, three Central Asian countries and four subregional organizations (see Map). Unfortunately the demand for Facility support exceeds current funding; as a result many other applicants are still waiting to join.

By the end of 2006, the Facility had funded a total of about 220 grants to stakeholders at the country level, of which only 25 percent are governmental organizations. These grants have amounted to a total of about US\$6 million, under ever-growing yearly allocations. The average amount made available to a partner country over three years has been US\$300 000 (see Figure).

With the expanded number of partners, the range of NFP-related topics supported by the Facility has increased dramatically since 2002. New areas include:

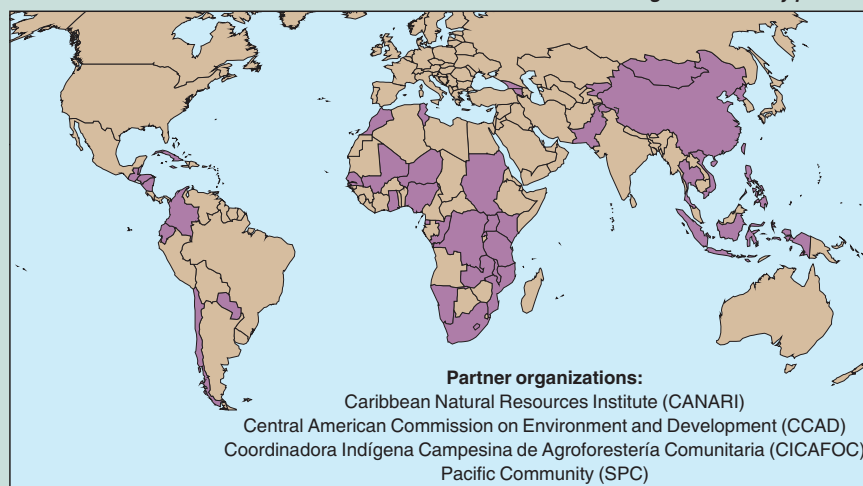
- **informed participation of stakeholders:** developing knowledge and skills; raising awareness of NFP processes; sensitization of decision-makers on forest-related issues; establishment of consultation processes; establishment and development of forest information systems and knowledge-sharing and -management initiatives



Country support provided by the National Forest Programme Facility, 2002–2006

- **policy and strategy formulation at different levels:** regional and subnational forest strategies and programmes; subsectoral strategies (e.g. afforestation/reforestation, agroforestry, protected areas, non-wood forest products, forest utilization, forestry education and research)
- **broadening NFPs:** integrating the Proposals for Action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) in national policy development; integrating NFPs into broader national strategies (poverty reduction, combating desertification, land-use planning); intersectoral coordination in NFP implementation; participatory forestry

National Forest Programme Facility partners





With Facility assistance, a local association of tree growers in Mubende District, Uganda, gathers to discuss how to apply for government funding

J. LEJEUNE

- **legal, fiscal and institutional instruments:** new forest legislation; dissemination of forest-related laws and regulations; development of new funding mechanisms for forestry; enabling private investment in the forest sector; decentralization

A second important function of the Facility is to facilitate the exchange of experience, information and knowledge relevant to NFP processes worldwide, both through its Web site (www.nfp-facility.org) and through regional workshops, networks and communities of practice. Information resources available on the site include the “NFP update” initiative, providing information about NFPs in more than 100 countries, and NFP Digests, which collect papers and Web links on a series of themes relevant to NFPs. To address the digital divide, the Facility is also producing a series of printed Readers containing abridged versions of the papers from the electronic digests.

The following are only some of the lessons that have come out of the Facility’s first five-year phase.

- Civil society participation is most efficient when non-governmental and community-based organizations are well organized. Even small projects funded by Facility grants can enhance effective participation.

- Significant results can be achieved with modest but well-targeted inputs.
- The employment of a multidonor trust fund has enhanced donor harmonization and reduced transaction costs for individual contributors.
- The selection of partner countries on the basis of clear criteria and procedures, under the authority of the multistakeholder Steering Committee, has raised countries’ confidence and trust in the Facility’s mandate and approach. The open and transparent process established by the Facility to allocate grants to stakeholders at the country level has also raised stakeholders’ trust in the NFP process and, in some partner countries, spread to other processes at the national level.
- The key challenge of the Facility in some partner countries is to ensure that forestry departments facilitate and coordinate the process but are not the sole implementers. This challenge is the very *raison d’être* of the Facility. Its staff is increasingly involved in coaching forestry departments and other country stakeholders.

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Some examples of Facility support to countries – Africa

REVIVING THE NATIONAL FOREST POLICY IN NIGERIA

Starting in 2002, the Facility supported Nigeria in reviving its dormant NFP process by revamping the National Forestry Development Committee, whose role in leading the NFP process was obstructed by lack of funds. With Facility support, the committee embarked on revising the existing but outdated forest policy and formulating a related legal framework. The committee organized several stakeholder meetings to draft the new National Forest Policy and Forestry Act, which were officially adopted by Parliament in 2006. The broad stakeholder participation in the process was a new phenomenon for the country.

A DATABASE FOR FORESTRY STAKEHOLDERS IN TANZANIA

In the United Republic of Tanzania, special efforts are being made to construct strong foundations for good governance, empowerment of all stakeholders and facilitation of key stakeholders to partake in development processes. To this end, it is crucial to know who the forestry stakeholders are. With Facility support, Tanzania’s Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture conducted a survey of civil-society and private-sector organizations involved in the NFP process and developed an online database accessible to all containing detailed information about them. Field officers were trained to collect and validate the data and to maintain the Web site.

The national forest programme as an element of forest policy reform: findings from Kyrgyzstan

I. Kouplevatskaya

Economic and political transition provided Kyrgyzstan with an opportunity for a complete forest policy reform emphasizing participation and democratic governance.

K yrgyzstan has had a unique experience of forest policy reform because within a short time frame the country was able to establish and implement all the consecutive steps of the forest policy cycle: from the elaboration of a long-term strategy and the definition of measures and actions for its realization, to the establishment of concrete tools and mechanisms for their practical implementation (see Box, page 16). This article outlines the particular characteristics of the reform process, particularly its emphasis on participation and democratic governance, highlighting the place of the National Forest Programme within the new Kyrgyz forest policy.

CIRCUMSTANCES FAVOURED A COMPREHENSIVE REFORM

A complete forest policy reform was possible because following the country's independence from the former Soviet Union the development of market relations and decentralization of State functions, including a decrease of the State budget, created conditions for privatization in many sectors of the country. The collapse of the formerly strong economic integration had degraded the economy, however, and the private sector, which was chaotically built on the basis of the former State factories and collective farms (*kolhozes* and *sovhozes*), was still weak. The equipment, means and materials (e.g. cattle, machinery) of these public enterprises were shared among numerous former employees, with no global market coherence at the end. Thus there was a need for the empowerment of new actors, including in the forest sector.

Kyrgyzstan's forests account for about

4.25 percent of the country's total area. They are predominantly mountain forests, mainly reserved for their soil protection and water regulation functions, with little emphasis on production of wood and non-wood forest products. At the beginning of the forest policy reform, privatization processes had not touched the Kyrgyz forest sector. The forests were still owned and managed by the State through a structure of *leshozes* (territorial forest management units, organized with a vertical hierarchical structure of planning, financing and reporting) remaining from the Soviet era. Reform was needed because this structure was no longer viable, for two reasons:

- The inability of the State to finance forest management activities (e.g. planning) was conflicting with the top-down planning practices.
- Economic instability and impoverishment, especially of the rural population, had increased the human pressure on forest resources and illegal activities in the forests. Increased fuelwood collection and rather unregulated timber harvesting were causing resource depletion and worsening forest condition in terms of biodiversity, forest health, and soil and slope protection. Thus a reorientation of the national forest policy was needed to define a balance between environmental, economic and social aspects of forest management.

External factors also contributed to the need for forest policy reform:

- As a newly independent country, Kyrgyzstan became active in the international policy arena and began

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Benchmarks in the forest policy reform process in Kyrgyzstan

1997–1998

Report on the Analysis of the Current Situation in the Forestry Sector in Kyrgyzstan defined potentials and constraints in the sector.

1999

Concept of Forestry Development set five strategic political goals for 20 to 25 years and ten main direction lines for their achievement. A new Forest Code was prepared as a legal framework for the implementation of the policy concept.

2001

A five-year Action Plan for 2001–2005 was conceived as an executive tool for the implementation of the Concept of Forestry Development, with concrete activities oriented to the achievement of results.

2003

An evaluation of the forest policy from 1999 to 2003 made it possible to formulate a common vision of the results achieved as well as the changes and adaptations needed to improve implementation.

2004

The Concept of Forestry Development was revised based on the results of the 2003 forest policy evaluation. The five abstract goals of the previous concept were replaced by three cornerstones reflecting the priorities of Kyrgyz forest policy:

- *The forest*, which needs to be protected through coordination of people's activities;
- *People*, who should be not only actors in forest management, but also final beneficiaries of forestry activities;
- *The State*, which needs to have new functions in order to be able to play an active part in the new framework.

The revised concept document defined ten strategic lines:

- conservation of forest biodiversity;
- definition of technical norms for sustainable forest management;
- handing over of certain productive functions and activities to the private sector;
- improvement of systems for collaborative forest management and leasing;
- rationalization of the structure of the State Forest Service on both the sub-national and national levels;
- implementation of economic reform in the structural units of the State Forest Service;
- raising of the status of State Forest Service employees;
- improvement of forest science and forestry education;
- enhanced efficiency of the system for financing of the forest sector;
- improvement of the information flow related to the forest sector and increased public awareness of activities in the sector.

This revised version served as the main policy document defining the strategy of forest sector development and the framework for other documents of forest policy and forest legislation.

The National Forest Programme was developed for the medium term (2005–2015) to define a set of activities and measures for the implementation of the Concept of Forestry Development.

2006

The National Action Plan 2006–2010 was created, outlining concrete actions for the realization of the National Forest Programme.

to participate in international and regional conventions and other initiatives for sustainable development, which created a framework of international commitments, imposing changes in the decision-making and planning processes.

- The changed geopolitical arrangements in Central Asia began to attract international donors to Kyrgyzstan, which brought with them certain conditions and requirements. The first such experience in the forest sector, a long-term (10- to 15-year) development support programme of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (1994), revealed that transformations at the local (*leshoz*) level would not be sustainable without national forest policy reform.

REFORM THROUGH PARTICIPATION

Another distinguishing feature of the new Kyrgyz forest policy process is its participatory nature, especially at the stages of policy definition, evaluation and adaptation. From the start of the process, participation was considered necessary to highlight the needs, priority concerns and potentials of the various stakeholders as well as to promote democracy by giving every person a voice and redistributing power. Participation in the definition of the new forest policy became a tool for adapting decision-making procedures to the new conditions and created a sense of ownership of decisions and responsibility for their implementation (Yunusova, 1999).

As the State was still very strong and the information coming from the various stakeholders (especially those that were not yet well organized) would not have been sufficient for the definition of the national forest policy, it was not considered possible to base the process only on bottom-up participation procedures. Thus a "mixed model" was applied combining bottom-up and top-down decision-making (Buttoud and Yunusova, 2002).

Sequence of steps in the participatory process of the forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan

- Clarification of issues, challenges and principles
- Collection and confrontation of different positions and needs through interviews, workshops, round tables and general discussions at each step of the process, with the aim of reaching a compromise on the main points
- Field discussions in different parts of the country, for a more comprehensive view on the potentials and needs of different stakeholders, not necessarily directly linked with the forest sector
- Systematic collection of statistics and other technical data (e.g. total forest area, harvesting volume, planting) to complement the information collected through the participatory process
- Working group to reach a compromise between opposing positions while analysing all the data and information collected during the workshops, discussions, field trips and study of existing documentation, and to prepare draft documents
- Presentation of policy documents at national or international conferences for the broadest possible dissemination and legitimization of the results and to ensure government responsibility for their implementation, while also attracting new participants to the further steps of the process

The policy is thus based on the technical expertise of forestry specialists and also takes into account the positions and interests of other stakeholders. The same logic of participation (Box above) was systematically applied at all steps of the forest policy process and in the elaboration of all the policy documents (see Box on page 16).

Participation in policy definition was a new phenomenon in formerly soviet Kyrgyzstan. The participatory approach was recommended by forest policy experts who were invited by the Kyrgyz-Swiss forest sector support programme to define the methodology for the forest policy reform, and was initially perceived as an experiment introduced (and in some sense imposed) by international obligations and donors. But since democracy proceeds from participation, in the transition period the Kyrgyz forestry administration could not refuse to embrace it. Although the administrators, accustomed to top-down procedures, did not welcome the approach, their attitudes changed in the course of the reform process, so that by 2006 they

had come to appreciate, promote and even instrumentalize it (for details see Yunusova, Buttoud and Grisa, 2003; Kouplevaskaya-Yunusova, 2005; Kouplevaskaya-Yunusova and Buttoud, 2006).

The adoption of participation in Kyrgyzstan was a learning process. In the initial stages, stakeholders were mainly represented by forestry personnel from different levels of the hierarchy, some heads from local or village governments and representatives of other ministries and agencies. When the approach was introduced, the forestry administration was reluctant to relinquish the habitual top-down style of decision-making, arguing that non-specialists lacked the necessary competence. There were also concerns that the openness of the policy definition process could allow criticism of management in the forest sector and of the forestry administration. The new participants in policy definition were at first reserved about giving substantive input into the process, either because of doubts whether critical remarks would be accepted (mainly the forestry staff)

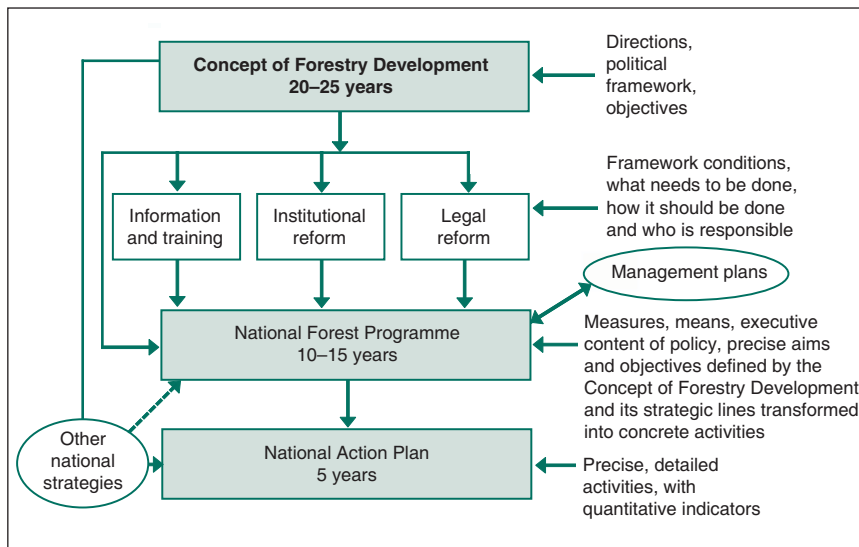
or because of detachment from forestry issues (participants who were not linked with the sector directly). As the process went on, however, attitudes to and styles of participation changed. The foresters learned to express their opinions (even critical ones) freely. New stakeholders – non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local populations, private entrepreneurs – joined the process and discovered that participation in forest policy reform is possible and can provide opportunities to change and even improve their situation.

Furthermore, by pioneering public involvement in policy form, the forestry administration gained the image of an innovator and was quickly promoted in the State hierarchy, acquiring the status of an independent service reporting directly to the president.

ROLE OF THE NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMME IN THE FOREST POLICY REFORM

The Kyrgyz National Forest Programme (NFP) was not originally recognized as a necessary and integral part of the policy cycle (see Box on page 16), partly because the concept was not yet quite clear, especially in a situation where so many procedures and structures were changing at the same time but often copying the old schemes and approaches. In these conditions an innovation that had no equivalent in the previous system was not considered a realistic priority.

During the evaluation of the first five years of the new forest policy implementation in 2003, the gap between the 20- to 25-year strategic Concept of Forestry Development (Intercooperation Kyrgyzstan and State Forest Service, 2004) and the concrete five-year Action Plan became evident. The National Forest Programme (Intercooperation Kyrgyzstan and State Forest Service, 2005) was thus introduced into the policy process (Figure 1) as a new type of strategic planning intended for ten years and elaborated through discussions and negotiations



1
Road map of forest policy reform in Kyrgyzstan

with various stakeholders, including the local population. The NFP addresses environmental and socio-economic issues and treats the forest economy as part of regional development. It is based on the ten strategic lines defined in the 2004 revision of the Concept of Forestry Development and is to be implemented through the five-year Action Plans. The implementation of the NFP is also linked with an improved information and education system, as well as with legal reform (an adapted forest code) and institutional reform (reorganization of the State Forest Service).

Structure of the NFP document

Complementary to the revised Concept of Forestry Development, the NFP defines not only objectives and expected results, but also the responsibilities and means for their achievement, taking into consideration all the other strategic programmes existing in the country. The introduction to the Kyrgyz NFP notes that it is “a complex of the activities and measures which need to be carried out for consistent implementation of the forest policy”.

Section I specifies goals and tasks of the NFP, framework conditions necessary for its implementation (legal context and institutional reform) and the roles and responsibilities of the various State agencies linked to NFP implementation.

Section II specifies activities and expected results, constraints, means, indicators and responsibilities for each strategic line derived from the revised Concept of Forestry Development.

The conclusion recognizes that forestry activities cannot be conducted without considering the needs expressed by the various stakeholders. It recognizes that forest conservation can be organized only through the coordinated and consecutive actions of all involved parties. As a policy cycle has an iterative nature, the NFP should be subject to revisions through an adaptive monitoring system, based on indicators for evaluation and follow-up.

An addendum to the main document contains tables with a detailed explanation of activities, expected results, indicators, resources, schedule and responsible implementing agencies for each of the ten strategic lines.

Content of the NFP document

The Kyrgyz NFP document states that: “The goal of the programme is determined

by the components of the national forest policy: ensuring the sustainable development of forests through involvement of the population and local communities in the management of forests and the definition of the role of the State in the forest sector in the new environment.”

The implementation of the NFP is to reflect the following principles:

- application of the appropriate mechanisms for the involvement of all stakeholders;
- decentralization, wherever it is appropriate;
- transfer of power to regional and local structures in accordance with the legal framework determined by the country’s constitution and legislation;
- respect for traditional rights and customs, including those of indigenous people, local communities living near the forests and forest owners;
- compliance with the legislation regulating land use relations;
- establishment of efficient coordination mechanisms and procedures for the resolution of conflicts.

The objective of the NFP is to define consecutive actions and evaluate implemented activities and measures needed to realize the ten strategic lines of the revised Concept of Forestry Development in a timely manner.

The results expected from the implementation of the NFP are defined as follows:

- ensured conservation of national forests and increased forest cover (with emphasis on soil protection and water regulation), as well as conservation of biodiversity;
- sustainable management of forest resources;
- rationalization of the State Forest Service structure and general reform of the forest sector;
- enhancement of the role of local communities in the rational use, conservation and development of forest resources;



Stakeholders defined capacities, risks, priorities and indicators in NFP elaboration workshops

- improved systems for and access to information in the forest sector.

Elaboration, tools and methodology

The elaboration of the NFP was based on the same logic and the same combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches as all the previous steps of the forest policy cycle (Box page 17). The whole policy process was led by a working group comprising representatives of the forestry administration (with different levels of authority at different steps), scientists, representatives of other related ministries and agencies and representatives of the donors. This working group was specifically trained in moderation techniques (Box on this page) and was advised by forest policy experts throughout the process. The NFP's principle of partnership and participation opened possibilities for involvement of many new stakeholders, including environmental and social NGOs, local village councils and representatives of the rural population.

The working group listed activities for each strategic line and asked stakeholders to identify constraints, means and responsibilities linked with each. Capacities, risks, priorities and indicators for monitoring were defined through workshops and seminars involving the stakeholders. The working group also guaranteed an intersectoral approach by collecting information on existing

national strategies and seeking links with the NFP.

The period of the NFP elaboration was marked by an increased interest of various stakeholders in forestry and forest policy. Since the NFP had to be

consistent with the national policy framework and sustainable development strategies, including national commitments to global initiatives, representatives of governmental, parliamentary and presidential structures absolutely needed to be involved. The NFP requirement of intersectorality made it necessary to invite other ministries and agencies. In total 19 institutions participated in the elaboration of the NFP, and 14 of them have documented responsibility for its implementation. Through the process of negotiating priorities and solutions, interagency competition (e.g. between

Checklist for working groups

HOW TO LEAD TO THE DISCUSSION

Since people naturally tend to speak of problems and their solutions, it helps to combine the discussion of constraints and means of reaching predefined objectives with the definition of priorities.

HOW TO DEFINE PRIORITIES

What is a priority? It is an activity that:

- everybody says is important;
- absolutely requires a new solution;
- is a condition for beginning another activity;
- is easier to carry out than all the others.

Priorities may be defined only in the course of discussion, but greater efficiency can be obtained by using cards on a board, ranking activities or assigning priority marks.

In discussing priorities, a focus on participation will guarantee a more democratic (although less coherent) approach.

GUIDING QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED IN DEFINING NFP CONTENT

- **Expected results:** What results do we want to achieve in ten years?
- **Means:** What do we need to achieve them?
- **Constraints:** What might be obstacles on the way to achieving them?
- **Implementation and responsible persons:** Who will do what?

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE DIVERSITY OF OPINIONS AND SITUATIONS

As there are large differences among regions and forest types in Kyrgyzstan, all differences should be brought to the table, and all negotiated proposals should be reflected in the final document.

the State Forest Service and the Ministry of Environment) evolved into collaborative relations.

Support from the National Forest Programme Facility for implementation of the Kyrgyz NFP, particularly in capacity-building, awareness raising and information sharing, provides additional prospects for making the actions proposed in the NFP document effective at the practical level.

Integrated Management Plans

The NFP explicitly specifies the need for Integrated Management Plans as a basic tool for its practical implementation at the subnational level. The National Action Plan elaborated in 2006 specifies

the schedule for introducing Integrated Management Plans in the different forest types and regions of Kyrgyzstan. These plans link technical prescriptions for using forest land and resources with the social, economic and environmental dynamics at the regional level. The planning of local forest activities covers both the technical work of foresters and the various types of land use by villagers.

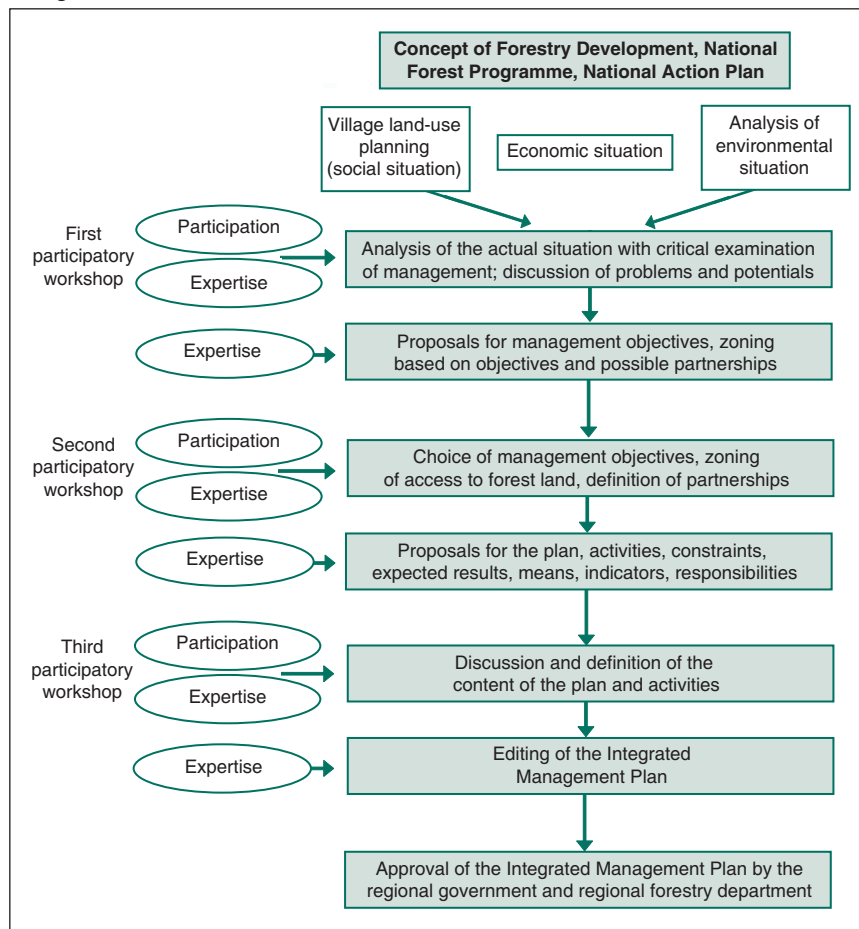
The formulation of an Integrated Management Plan follows the logic of the national policy formulation process, involving a combination of participatory procedures and professional expertise. It depends significantly on compromise among stakeholders with conflicting interests and the creation of new partnerships (Figure 2). For example:

- scientists, both local and international, have followed the process

from the beginning, contributing to environmental, economic, social and policy aspects and to definition and adaptation of methodology;

- villagers and village councils, foresters and *leshoz* administrations have agreed about common forest activities, even though conflict resolution procedures were often required to reach a compromise;
- questions of land use and land demarcation have been resolved with the local departments of the Ministry of Agriculture and land registration services;
- the responsibility for the plans' implementation has been assumed jointly by regional forestry departments and regional governments;
- a training centre has been established and special courses organized for future forestry specialists (at Bachelor and Master levels) and current forestry staff, managed jointly by the State Forest Service and Osh Technological University and aimed at creating the knowledge necessary for the formulation and application of Integrated Management Plans.

2 Logic of the Integrated Management Plan



CONCLUSION: NEW MODES OF GOVERNANCE IN THE KYRGYZ FOREST SECTOR

The NFP process in Kyrgyzstan is probably unique in the international experience: conceived as a part of a whole logical sequence of forest policy reform, based on and adapted to the specific conditions, priorities and potentials of the country, and followed through with tools for its implementation.

This process has influenced administration and decision-making in the forest sector in the following ways.

- The process introduced and was based on the participation of different stakeholders in decision-making, thus helping to redistribute responsibilities, create new partnerships and empower new actors.
- The opening of the forest policy pro-



Formulation of an Integrated Management Plan: discussion among foresters from the leshoz (forest management unit) and the regional forest administration, representatives from several villages and village councils, and scientists (southern Kyrgyzstan)

cess to new actors introduced a need for intersectoral coordination.

- The continuation of the process at the regional level through Integrated Management Plans, which give responsibility to local populations and governments in planning and implementation, has created conditions for multilevel governance and a need for accountable expertise.
- All the policy documents elaborated during the full cycle of the forest policy reform set out requirements and mechanisms for regular monitoring, evaluation and adaptation of strategies and measures, thus enabling iteration of the process.

Thus the establishment of the NFP process has created the conditions and the demand for new modes of governance in forestry. It introduced changes in the way institutions work and the role of foresters, and necessitated parallel and complementary reforms in training and information systems, institutions and laws.

Sustainable forest management is a social, not political, vision, but it can

serve political purposes. It depends on participation, which is creating the capacity for learning and self-determination for all parties involved, but the State also has an essential role. A balance among experts, the State and other stakeholders is necessary. This is why the “mixed model” developed for the Kyrgyz NFP, which leaves some responsibility to the forest administration while engaging it in communicative behaviour, has successfully led to compromises acceptable by all stakeholders.

The main donor (the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) recognized and respected the Kyrgyz authority and people as the owners of the process, and solutions were never formally imposed.

Furthermore, policy reform is an iterative learning process which involves continuous change in the positions and roles of the different actors in the process. It took some time before the forest administration recognized that it could gain from participatory decision-making, but the results are significant.

This combination does not happen

by itself, it must be constructed. The Kyrgyz NFP process was based not only on ideas and political strategies, but also on a methodology that defined the process and its links with the field; that is why policy experts played such an important part in the process. The mixed model introduced in the process helped to avoid opposition between the State and the general public.

In general, the NFP process in Kyrgyzstan is a sign of the changes in the governance of the society and can be seen as a logical step in the political discourse, affirming democratic development and changes towards a market economy. Of course the process was not easy and did not go perfectly. There were gaps, breakdowns and deviations. For example, staff rotation and the frequent replacement of heads of department and administration (a result of the general instability in the country) made it difficult to guarantee continuity and sometimes made it necessary to start processes over again. Another difficulty was the sometimes false claim that processes were participatory even when they were not, to facilitate approval by the government and the public. Since one-way consultation is easier than real negotiation with stakeholders, some planning processes appeared to follow all the necessary participatory procedures but

then did not take the participants' ideas into consideration.

But the NFP is a living process, which has produced a rich practical experience. It has been a laboratory for collaborative learning, where each participating group has acquired new knowledge and a new vision of its own actions and roles. From a survey carried out at the end of the planning phase, it appears that the participants have embraced the first changes introduced through this participatory sequence.

In both its successes and its difficulties, the Kyrgyz NFP process provides a model for neighbouring countries in transition that need to reorient their forest policy under strong environmental and socio-economic constraints. ♦



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Taking participation of villagers beyond the villages to national forest policy processes in the Philippines

P. O'Hara and J. Pulhin

Recent initiatives in the planning of community-based forest management (CBFM) – the core forest management strategy in the Philippines – have emphasized the use of appropriate methods to ensure meaningful participation of villagers in the policy process.

Participatory approaches in the forest sector have been well developed and applied in villages throughout the Philippines for the past few decades (see Box, page 24). They have often focused on assessing the “needs” of villagers, which conveniently seem to fit the objectives of service delivery projects designed to wean the local population off the forest resources. Yet the money that has been invested in field-based projects to meet needs with alternative livelihoods has not been matched by evidence that the investment has worked. There are few indications that the approach of need-based alternative-livelihood field projects is reducing deforestation or widely improving livelihoods.

Moving beyond “needs” to opinions of villagers reveals a widespread view that the reasons for forest problems such as harvesting without permits or failure to invest resources, time and effort in forest management are found in centralized policy and policy-making processes geared to protect the trees from the people. For example, villagers frequently remark that the criminalization of customary forest use and cumbersome, time-consuming procedures for obtaining harvest permits are disincentives for villagers to manage forest resources sustainably – and even invite illegal use. At least in the eyes of many villagers, site-based forestry projects, no matter how participatory, deal with the symptoms of these problems (e.g. by providing environmental education and seedlings), but not the underlying causes.

Compared with the money spent in the forest sector on participatory approaches

in villages over the past few decades, a fraction has been spent on participatory approaches in national policy processes. Methods and approaches for ensuring fair and equal communication have been widely used in forestry field projects at the village level but have not been employed at the national level. Even when villagers are invited to forest policy consultation workshops, seating arrangements, process and methods, language and jargon often conspire to exclude them from meaningful participation.

The Forest Management Bureau of the Department of the Environment for Natural Resources (DENR) – along with the College of Forestry and Natural Resources of the University of the Philippines Los Baños through its Environmental Justice Project, the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) and other partners in the Philippines – has increased efforts in the past five years to redress the balance by promoting more participation by villagers in national forest policy processes. The donor support for these efforts has come from organizations such as Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC), FAO and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

This article discusses some early lessons in process and methods, drawing on two interconnected initiatives that linked villagers to national forest policy processes in 2006. Both concerned the planning of community-based forest management (CBFM), the central forest management strategy in the Philippines. In 2006 these processes have been brought under the auspices of the Philippine National Forest Programme

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Roots of participation and the Community-Based Forest Management Programme in the Philippines

Participatory processes in the Philippines evolved in answer to the land tenure system introduced under colonization by Spain and retained under American rule (starting in 1898) and after independence in 1946. The Maura Act of 1894 required villagers and individual landowners to register their landholdings officially. Those who failed to do so were legally considered squatters no matter how long they had been on the land. Almost two-thirds of the Philippine territory was unregistered and thus legally belonged to the State. At independence, nearly 60 percent of the Philippines' land area was classified as State forest, where the government had the sole authority to allocate forest land uses and resource use rights.

Between 1949 and the early 1970s industrial timber exploitation expanded rapidly; forest products accounted for 1.5 percent of the total value of Philippine exports in 1949, 11 percent in 1955 and 33 percent in the late 1960s. Deforestation was 172 000 ha per year at the end of this period. Even though rural forest users often used secondary forest or remnants left after logging by large enterprises, officially the rural poor were often blamed for deforestation.

In the 1970s and 1980s fledgling "participatory" forestry programmes were created, often focused on educating and organizing the "squatters" and on providing employment and livelihood opportunities, with the public aim of encouraging them to protect the remaining forest resources, but also with the aim of appeasing a growing rural insurgency.

In 1995 all participatory forestry initiatives were brought under one umbrella, the Community-Based Forest Management Programme (CBFMP), which became the core strategy of forest management in the Philippines. The programme focused on organizing communities and providing alternative livelihood strategies with the aim of taking pressure off the natural forest. A handful of communities whose forests were considered to be sufficiently stocked by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) were granted utilization rights for wood products, but legally sanctioned utilization was often hindered by costly and complex procedural requirements stipulated by DENR and, more recently, by a series of national cancellations of the resource use permits in response to site-specific problems or violations.

Between 2000 and 2004 a review of CBFMP was driven by reformers within and outside DENR. Revised CBFM guidelines were developed based on consultations by DENR with numerous NGOs, academics and community members. Revisions make the procedural requirements for communities to utilize the forest resources more appropriate, in terms of both complexity and cost to communities. This is envisaged to encourage more stewardship by community members over the forest resources. The revised guidelines were approved in late 2004. A national multistakeholder review of the first ten years of CBFM was conducted in 2006 and a strategic plan for the next ten years was drawn up.

(NFP) with the support of the National Forest Programme Facility. The NFP focuses on the further development of CBFM in the country.

What was interesting about these initiatives was not only the involvement of many stakeholders, but also the innovation and experimentation in methodol-

ogy. Methods previously used only by professionals to deal with villagers were now used at the national level by a mix of professionals and villagers.

APPROACHES AND METHODS

Approaches and methods were developed to tackle two key challenges identified

in policy processes. The first problem identified was that forest policy was often made by a few people for many, often in one-size-fits-all format, and often in offices far removed from field realities (Figure 1).

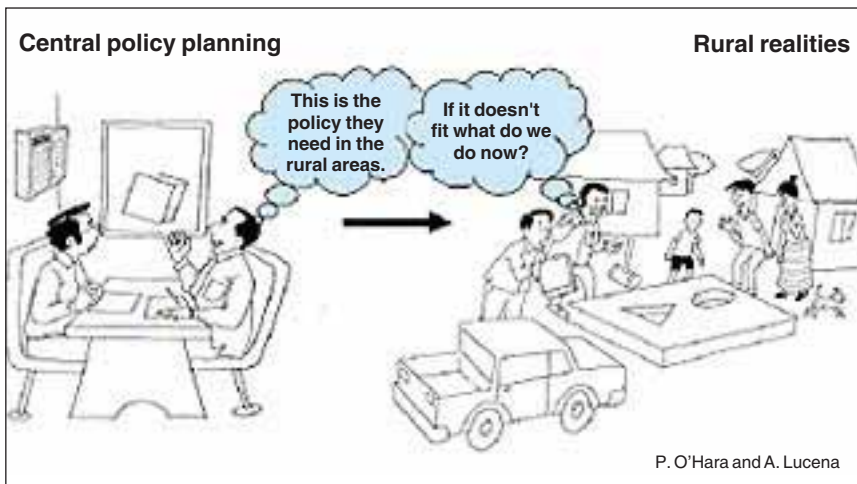
Another key challenge in forest policy processes is the need to take into account a multiplicity of perspectives on causes of forestry problems (Figure 2). Often those who are most likely to feel the consequences of forest policy, the rural poor living in and around the forest, have been the last to have a voice in policy processes. Interestingly, villagers have had little control over management decisions related to forest planting, maintenance and harvesting – much less than in agriculture, for example. Even though villagers are far more numerous, are closer to the forests and have more intimate practical knowledge of forests than most other stakeholders, they have often been excluded from important decision-making.

The initiatives discussed in this article attempted to level the playing field in communication, not only by enabling the marginalized to have a voice but also by containing the powerful. As well as seeking policy outcomes, the initiatives aimed to develop participatory policy process methodology with an aim to institutionalize processes and methods at the national level.

These initiatives gave evidence of new demands for the role of participatory forest policy researchers and facilitators, fundamentally to do with changing attitudes and behaviour resulting from different assumptions about villagers' roles in forest-sector decision-making (Figure 3).

LESSONS FROM A MULTISTAKEHOLDER REVIEW OF TEN YEARS OF CBFM

The workshop "Multi-stakeholder Review of 10 Years of CBFM in the Philippines, a Forum for Reflection and Dialogue" was held in April 2006. It was led by a non-governmental organization (NGO) and an academic department, but the design



1
Assumptions of policy planners in the office often do not match rural realities – and the realities sometimes change

and implementation included numerous government organizations, NGOs and villagers. The forum aimed to:

- give rural people a voice at the national level, to make forest policies, programmes and initiatives more appropriate for them and to advance community forestry;
- provide a platform for meaningful negotiations among all the key stakeholder groups in the forest sector in the Philippines;
- provide an example to help inspire the democratization of forest policy-making processes in the country.

In preparation for the workshop,

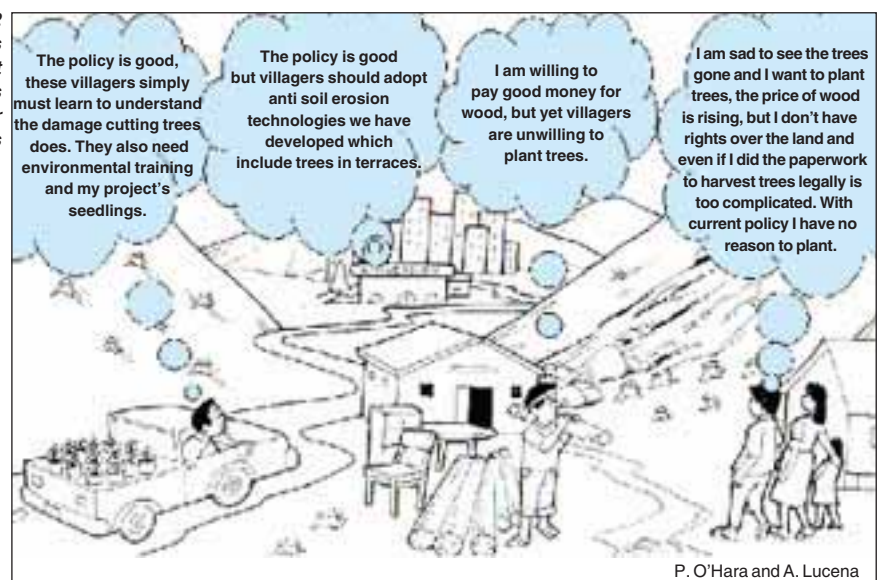
research teams from IIRR and the University of the Philippines Los Baños visited villages around the country, which were carefully selected to represent the range of geographical, policy, tenure and ecological diversity. Repeated visits were undertaken to build trust (e.g. anonymity of individual views was guaranteed if requested) and limit false expectations for the initiative (e.g. study teams used public transport and avoided big spending).

At each site, study teams provided opportunities for villagers to conduct their own thorough analysis of the forest sector, free from the viewpoints and

assumptions of the study team. Care was taken to ensure that many voices in the villages were heard and that the views reported represented a high percentage of villagers. These accounts were thoroughly validated and verified using many different methods. The word “need” and the use of questionnaires were avoided, as earlier experiences indicated that they stimulated bias. For example when asked about their needs, villagers tended to fish for material inputs or services rather than more fundamental changes.

The full analysis of the forest sector that was gradually developed in this way was presented in the national workshop by

2
Stakeholders have different perspectives on forest-sector problems



P. O'Hara and A. Lucena

3
Degrees of participation in the policy process, indicating the changing roles that a participatory forest policy researcher (or other professional) may have to play in a meaningfully participatory national forest programme

| Degree of participation | Typical role of researcher | Typical assumption of researcher | Researcher's perception of role of villager |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|
| High ↑ | Facilitates process where villagers do own analysis | Villagers recognize causes of forest-sector problems but lack opportunity to examine them with other key stakeholders in the sector | Can be at any level |
| | Helps design and facilitate a process where villagers and other key stakeholders can meaningfully interact | | Analysis, presentation of evidence, persuading and deliberating with other key stakeholders |
| | Focuses on process and methods | | To present opinions |
| Low ↓ | Gathers information from villagers and does analysis | Villagers are the causes of forest-sector problems | Restricted to village level |
| | Presents analysis to other key stakeholders | Villagers lack capacity to articulate causes of problems to other key stakeholders | Participates by providing information to researchers |
| | Focuses on content and outcomes | | To present needs |

village representatives using materials they had developed themselves.

Other stakeholders – from the Forest Management Bureau of DENR, the private sector, NGOs and academia – were also invited to prepare forest sector analyses for the workshop. These were to follow the format of the presentations prepared by the villagers, for easy comparison.

Many villagers had little or no experience of workshops, which put them at a disadvantage relative to other stakeholders. To make them more comfort-

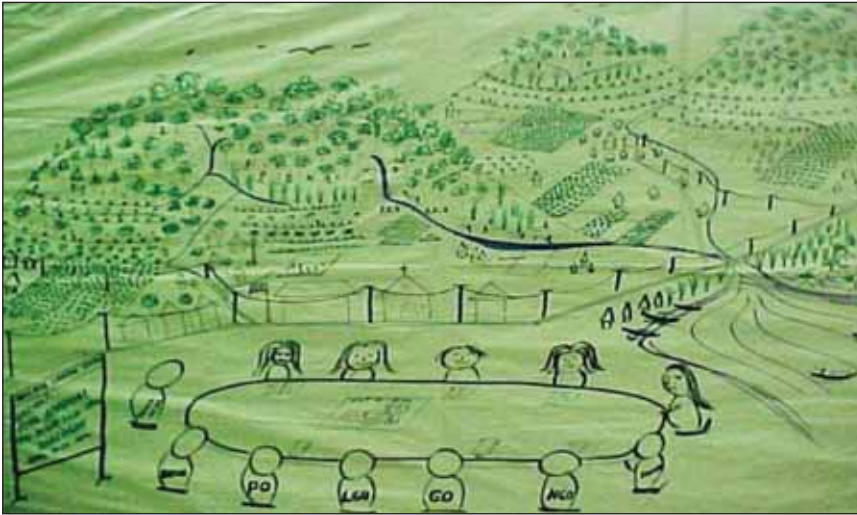
able, the national language Tagalog was used rather than English, as requested by villagers in pre-workshop meetings. Although translation was still needed for some because the Philippines has many local languages, villagers found that the use of Tagalog limited the frequency of technical jargon and acronyms that could exclude them. Villagers were also invited to the venue a few days beforehand so they would feel comfortable with the place. They had an opportunity to review the workshop design (including seating, materials and timing) and to suggest

revisions when methods, purposes and processes were not appropriate or clear to them. The villagers took part in “dry runs” of all sessions and practised their presentations with peer review.

Some professionals attending the workshop resisted some of the actions intended to make the forum more comfortable for villagers. They were concerned, for example, that if English was not used the few foreign donor representatives might feel excluded from the proceedings. The simple solution was to advise foreign donors in advance to bring interpreters. Some professionals did not want to write their ideas on cards, thinking they were not needed and preferring only to talk; but villagers, having less confidence to express themselves verbally in large workshops, saw them as an important aid for expressing their views. Some villagers feared that if questions were only delivered verbally, they might fail to understand technical or academic words and be embarrassed publicly.

Examples of two of the numerous exercises used for forest sector analysis in the villages: a Venn diagram (left) is used to describe relationships among stakeholders in the forest sector; a ranking exercise (right) helps participants discuss their perception of benefits (both legal and illegal) from forestry to various stakeholders under the current policy





A common vision of a good future in the forest sector drawn by a multistakeholder group during the workshop highlights the agreement reached by all on the importance of involving all stakeholders in decision-making

The workshop process was designed to require little and non-dominant moderation. When it was necessary, volunteers from all the stakeholder groups stepped forward to moderate. Care was taken to ensure all stakeholder groups were represented. The workshop lasted three days and had three day-long steps: listening, debating and compromising (see Box, page 28).

Even though there were disagreements over many policy aspects in the workshop, stakeholders found much agreement about the process by which policy should be made and implemented in the future. As a direct result of the workshop, it was agreed that villagers would from now on be represented on the national steering committee for the development of CBFM and that the government would no longer make unilateral changes in CBFM-related policy, for example regarding forest use rights. It was agreed that there should be a concerted effort by all stakeholders to institutionalize participatory policy processes in the forest sector.

A SECOND EXAMPLE

A similar multistakeholder approach was adopted in the government-led workshop “National Community Based Forest Strategic Plan Update: a Consultative Workshop” in September 2006. This workshop,

aimed at crafting the national CBFM strategic action plan for the next decade, was part of the Philippine NFP activities and was designed and organized by a multistakeholder committee composed of representatives of villages, NGOs, academia, donor agencies and DENR management and field personnel. The three-day workshop was attended by 90 representatives of these stakeholder groups as well as local government units and other government institutions. Villagers were represented both formally (CBFM federation representatives) and informally (those from the research sites).

In general, the forum adopted a process of listening, debate and analysis, and compromise similar to that used in the workshop held the preceding April. However, methods were selected to suit the workshop’s objectives, e.g. to develop a written strategy document which would guide CBFM policy.

During the listening part, representatives of the different stakeholders, including villagers, had the opportunity to speak about their CBFM experiences and observations as well as their perceived challenges and prospects for CBFM in the next decade.

For the analysis portion, the participants were divided into three major stakeholder groups, namely villagers, government and support groups (i.e.

NGOs, academia, local government units and donors). Each group clarified its vision of CBFM in the next ten years and stated expectations of the roles of the different stakeholders in achieving this vision.

During the compromise stage, all the outputs of the different groups were presented in a plenary for deliberation among all participants. The output of this deliberation was a synthesis document for the national strategy for CBFM implementation for the next ten years. The strategy was projected on the wall and extensively debated line by line until consensus and compromise were reached on the wording. Where disputes remained, processes were considered to tackle the disagreement in the future. All stakeholder groups felt a high degree of ownership over the document at the end.

It was mutually agreed that this strategic plan will not be a blueprint, which was a key criticism of previous plans, but will be revisited on a cyclic basis by multistakeholder groups at the regional and national levels. Revisions will be made based on the practical experiences of all stakeholders involved in its implementation. Unlike previous plans for the forest sector and for CBFM in the Philippines, this plan puts a strong emphasis on process (Figure 4).

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON THE INITIATIVES

Villagers lack opportunity, not capacity

When the process and methods were designed to be more appropriate for villagers, they did not need encourage-

Workshop process: listening, debating, compromising

SWOT analysis



Prior to the April workshop, the process and methods were discussed extensively with stakeholder representatives, especially with villagers. Ownership, general consensus and clarity concerning the process were seen as essential. In the workshop the programme was discussed clearly, posted on the wall in the local language and regularly referred back to by the moderators (volunteers from all the stakeholder groups present).



Workshop programme

LISTENING

All stakeholder groups, including the villagers, had an equal opportunity to present their opinions and the justifications behind them. No interruption was allowed; any feedback had to be written on cards and pinned on boards so that the presenter could read it afterwards. Each group was given time to digest the feedback (with villagers given assistance in deciphering acronyms and technical terms).

To synthesize all the main points, a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis was carried out according to different themes. Participants could write their contributions on cards, with different colours for each stakeholder group, anonymously if they so chose. Interestingly, what some stakeholders saw as strengths others saw as weaknesses.

DEBATING

Based on the SWOT analysis, which remained posted for reference, all stakeholder groups prepared position statements relating to key policy barriers in the forest sector. A “fishbowl” debate – so called because of its shape, an outer ring of chairs with the “fish” in the middle – was organized to provide space for all groups to state their positions and to justify them. Time cards were used to keep time, and continual shuffling of speakers allowed all stakeholder groups equal time to present, justify and argue their points without face-to-face confrontation. Each participant could have three minutes to justify his or her point and would then stay in the centre of the fishbowl while it was debated. Anyone else who wanted to make a point could take a vacant chair in the centre and speak for up to one minute, and would then return to the outer ring to free up the central chairs for others. The justifier could respond after each point. Everyone was treated equally in the debate, director or villager.

After this debate a secret ballot with different-coloured voting slips for each stakeholder group was held on the position statements and results were displayed for discussion. It was then easy to identify which points were close to consensus, and which were so divergent that they could only end in “agreeing to disagree”.

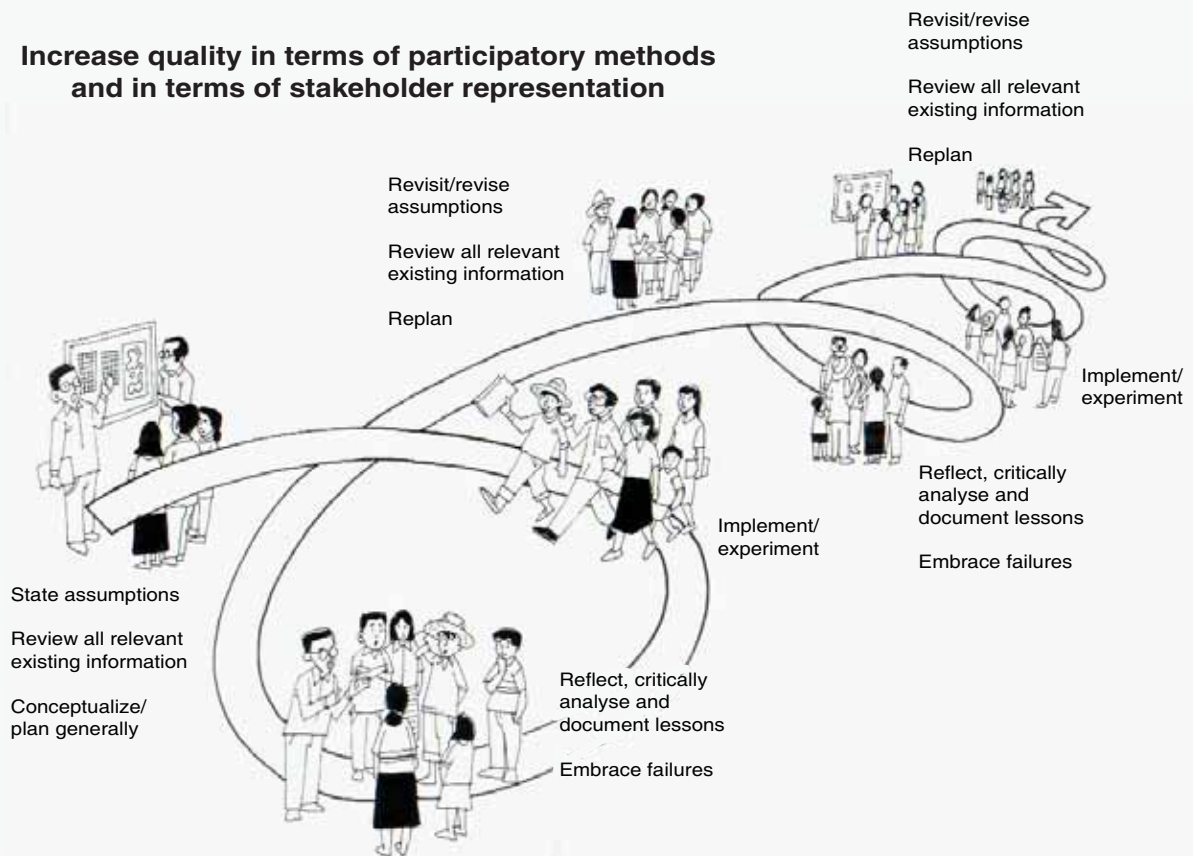
COMPROMISING

The final step was for small multistakeholder groups to struggle to find compromise or accommodation and to develop and agree to joint recommendations for tackling issues of divergence in a constructive way.



Fishbowl debate

Increase quality in terms of participatory methods and in terms of stakeholder representation



4 An iterative learning and action guide for a participatory NFP process

ment to take part in policy processes. Although their confidence and contributions improved with practice, it was clear that the main barrier to participation by villagers in policy processes was lack of opportunity, not lack of capacity. When participation was noticeably lacking, the process or methodology was usually at fault; changing it restored full participation.

Target not only the marginalized but also the influential

It is clear in hindsight that earlier efforts to empower only the marginalized through capacity building while neglecting the powerful were naïve. Strategies (both formal and informal) are thus

needed to involve different stakeholders. Working with environmental NGOs and journalists, for example, proved important, as their pressure on politicians in the past has often resulted in simplistic top-down quick-fix policy solutions which derailed movement towards more democratic forest policy processes in the Philippines. The workshop organizers also channelled considerable effort into obtaining support (verbal and written) for both the process and the outcomes from influential participants such as the current and former DENR Secretaries, a provincial governor and important donors. The support of the DENR Secretary was quickly captured in a media release which included all of the major workshop outcomes and was reviewed by all stakeholder groups before its circulation. The participatory methods used in the workshop ensured that high-ranking

participants and vocal NGOs did not dominate the process.

Match methods to purpose and context

All methods were developed to match purpose and context. Spontaneous adaptations were a common feature. Effective facilitation required continual experimentation and practice and, very importantly, appropriate feedback mechanisms from all involved.

Representation

Because these initiatives often had a strong influence on national policy, they invited continual questions of which stakeholder groups should be involved, how effectively they were represented and who had the right to make the decisions. Current practice in the Philippines is to mix formal authorized representatives of stakeholder groups with more

randomly selected or volunteering members, and also to link subnational and national processes. Representation is not perfect but is far better than in the policy processes of a few years ago. Continual experimentation with representation is a key thrust of planned processes.

Professionals in the forest sector need participatory approaches

Professional practice has often been neglected in the focus on changing the practice of villagers. These and similar initiatives demonstrate that participatory approaches are not only appropriate for villagers. Getting professionals to practice and not only preach them is a key challenge in advancing participatory forest policy processes.

Participatory policy processes are about provoking feelings, not only about sharing information

Feelings were less evident in previous policy processes where researchers presented villagers' positions impassively on their behalf. In the participatory workshops where villagers interacted directly with policy-makers, feelings tended to come into play much more. On occasion tempers were lost and tears were shed. Expressions of both guilt and empathy came to the fore which seemed to lead to a greater sense of accountability. The expression of feelings and the creation of new relationships among stakeholders may have been as important in creating policy change as the evidence presented and should be taken into consideration in the design of interactions. For example, the fishbowl debate method stimulates constructive confrontation but precludes destructive arguments. Social events are also an important way to build informal links and stimulate respect and partnership.

CONCLUSION

Interest in multistakeholder processes is growing within the forest sector in the Philippines, especially among villagers who see them as an opportunity

that they never had before to influence policy. Through the workshops, stakeholder groups have quickly expanded their role from policy review only to policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The focus has as much to do with process as with outcome and follows an iterative learning approach. Ownership of the process among stakeholders has proved to be integrally linked with ownership of the outcomes.

Participatory or multistakeholder policy processes are not only a matter of getting a group of stakeholders together in a room. They require methods that give the marginalized a voice so that power imbalances in communication are eroded and domination by the powerful and articulate is avoided. With the many agendas, interests and perspectives involved, it has proved important not exclusively to target consensus, but also to provide room for compromise and disagreement.

The experiments in participatory policy processes have not been easy. Some professionals have resisted trying new approaches because of the chance of failure, and some have had to be convinced that villagers could meaningfully interact with high-level decision-makers on forest policy. Risk-taking and experimentation are essential.

The rewards of these efforts in policy formulation have begun to show. The authors have seen the impact of changes in a few lines of policy that represent the first steps towards giving villagers throughout the Philippines the encouragement they need to invest in forest management. For example, as a direct result of evidence presented by villagers during the participatory policy processes in the past few years, the work plans required for commercial forest utilization in CBFM are now to be prepared every five years instead of annually as before. This means that villagers now spend less time on paperwork and that delays in plan approval are not as disrupt-

tive to utilization as they were before. Furthermore, if the paperwork necessary for utilization rights is not approved by DENR in a number of days, it will now be automatically approved, so the onus is on DENR to act quickly.

Yet in addition to the concrete policy changes, the less tangible but important new relationships and greater accountabilities among stakeholders should also be seen as key outcomes of these policy processes.

The goal in the Philippines in the next few years is to institutionalize participatory policy processes by putting the processes themselves into policy. Within this policy will be regulations regarding quality control parameters, to ensure that even if key personalities change the processes will remain.

It is hoped that these lessons from experiments in more democratic policy processes will generate lessons of relevance for other countries. ♦

Internet consultations in support of national forest programmes

J. Cinq-Mars

The coalition responsible for the development of Canada's National Forest Strategy for 2003 to 2008 used the Internet to reach out to a greater number of stakeholders, including remote communities and young people.

Canada's first National Forest Strategy (NFS) was developed in 1981. At that time, the major concern was to ensure wood fibre access, and the development of the strategy involved a relatively small number of forestry specialists, mostly government officials. Since 1981, the NFS development process has followed the evolution of strategic thinking by including a variety of forest values in addition to wood production, such as spiritual values, environmental services and urban forestry.

Consistent with current trends, NFS development has increasingly relied on public participation and extensive consultation of all stakeholders, including the general public. Advantages of involving the general public in developing new strategies include:

- a wider source of information on which to base decisions;
- identification of emerging issues not already identified by policy research;
- input in monitoring existing policy and determining whether changes are needed.

One of the novelties in the development of the National Forest Strategy 2003–2008 was the use of the Internet for consultation purposes. The basic idea was to improve forest policy by encouraging greater participation, learning and sharing of experience and expertise. Another intent was to help to create greater transparency of the democratic process in forest policy development.

To begin with, the draft vision document for the NFS, a schedule describing the development process and a corre-

sponding list of important milestones were posted on the NFS Web site in addition to being distributed to the usual members of the forest community.

The vision document addressed the question of how Canadians wanted their forests to look within a 20- to 30-year horizon and how they wanted to use them. The National Forest Strategy Coalition committee responsible for this section of the strategy received numerous comments in support of the vision, many of them via the Internet.

Following the acceptance of the vision document by the NFS Steering Committee, a series of regional meetings to identify objectives for the strategy were held across the country. At the same time, the coalition conducted Internet consultations to reach Canadians who could not attend the regional meetings but wished to participate in the planning of the

The final output of the consultations: Canada's National Forest Strategy 2003–2008



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strategy. Stakeholders were notified about the strategy development and where to find the information and documentation on the Web through announcements in professional publications, journals and conferences as well as through mailings to the forest community.

The first draft of the NFS was presented at a national meeting and posted on the Internet at the same time. Thanks to the circulation of the draft strategy and its redrafting until a consensus position was reached, the current NFS includes a broader range of issues than did previous strategies.

Of the 145 consultation reports sent to the National Forest Strategy Coalition team drafting the strategy, more than 120 were communicated via the Internet. After the second version of the NFS was posted, the coalition received 45 consultation reports, all by Internet.

Since this was the first time that the NFS Coalition used the Internet as a means of reaching and communicating with the forest community, the NFS Steering Committee decided to carry out consultations using both the Internet and traditional mailings. Although no comparative cost assessment was carried out, posting documents on the Web clearly costs far less than traditional mailings.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE USE OF INTERNET FOR CONSULTATION

The consultation process in Canada demonstrated that the Internet makes it possible to reach more stakeholders than could normally be reached through meetings. This tool may be particularly useful in large countries where it is difficult and costly for people in remote locations to attend meetings. Although the NFS Coalition held five regional meetings and one national meeting, comments throughout the strategy development phase came via the Internet from individuals who had not attended any of the meetings.

Use of the Internet facilitates the iden-

tification and representation of regional perspectives that might otherwise be left out of the consultation process. In the best of situations, it would be ideal to hold regional meetings in each area of the country, but budget and time constraints often prevent this. With Internet, citizens do not have to be physically gathered at the same moment to get things accomplished.

Speed is also a great advantage. Use of the Internet can reduce the time required to consult stakeholders on a document. It can also allow a greater number of drafts to be circulated for consultation, thereby improving the quality of the final product. For many people, responding by e-mail is a more effective and less time-consuming way to participate in public consultations.

Using the Internet for public consultation facilitates participation in active policy development as it makes it possible for citizens to be involved in the successive steps of the process, and not just the information gathering phase. It also provides an opportunity to give feedback to stakeholders about their input.

However, it is fair to ask whether the responses received via the Internet were representative of all Canadian NFS stakeholders. It is possible that those who responded via the Internet were a more organized or sophisticated group (e.g. with a vested interest in the outcome) than those who attended meetings or those who failed to participate. Internet responses might be biased towards more computer-literate stakeholders. In regions with high Internet coverage and high computer literacy this may not be a problem, but in areas where Internet access is limited, such as remote rural areas for example, the use of Internet may present a more acute representation bias. Yet there are also biases associated with more traditional means of communication. It would be interesting to assess whether traditional mailings efficiently reach communities in remote areas; if not, other means of communication with

remote communities may need to be developed. A Steering Committee can play an important part in deciding to allocate more weight to the voices or comments from a less vocal, organized or computer-literate community.

Those who conduct Internet consultations should follow certain precautions to ensure that they are conducted fairly and effectively. The United Kingdom, for example, has established a code of practice to ensure a common standard for public consultations across the government (Cabinet Office, 2004). It sets forth the following six principles to be followed in all consultations and to be reproduced in all consultation documents.

- Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
- Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the time-scale for responses.
- Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
- Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.

Consulting documents via Internet and responding by e-mail can be a more effective and less time-consuming way to participate in public consultations



- Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation coordinator.
- Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

Such standards could inspire any forest management institution wishing to use the Internet as a means to consult the public in the development of a national forest programme or strategy.

OTHER INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN SUPPORT OF FOREST PROGRAMMES

Although the Internet is not yet available universally, it can no longer be considered a novelty. Rapid technological developments have brought other communication and information tools to the market, such as mobile-phone text messaging, podcasts (media files distributed by paid or unpaid subscription over the Internet for playback on mobile devices and personal computers) and blogs (on-line diaries on a subject), which could help reach out to even more people and which should be considered in the development or review of future forest programmes as means of disseminating information or organizing electronic discussions.

Mobile phones, currently numbered at 2 billion, are expected to reach 3 billion by 2008, with the greatest expansion expected in developing countries (ABI Research, 2006). Their capacity to send and receive text gives mobile phones the potential to become an increasingly important tool in public consultation, especially in areas where the Internet and landlines are not yet present. Internet access via mobile phones actually outpaces wireless access from notebook personal computers in many areas of the world. This is not to suggest that the complete draft text of a forest strategy would be read over a mobile phone,

but messages regarding the consultation schedule or other announcements could be communicated with popular electronic means.

In addition to innovations in hardware, recent developments include software that enables visitors to certain Web sites to add, remove and edit content. The best-known example of community-managed content is Wikipedia, a free online multilingual encyclopaedia developed and maintained by volunteers at large who pool their knowledge to improve it. Anyone can be a member and contribute or modify content. Started in 2001, Wikipedia now has a database of approximately 8 Gigabytes. If such an effective cooperative effort is feasible at the global scale, it is possible to imagine the development of forest programmes through similar electronic participation models. Coordination by representative stakeholders would still be required to ensure that conflicting opinions are managed and that controversial issues are resolved.

CONCLUSION

The growing recognition of civil society concerns and their inclusion in the agenda of international agreements and conventions brought about the first experiences in interactive policy development in the 1990s. Interactive policy approaches such as national forest programmes are increasingly recognized as a way of improving sectoral governance. New technologies such as Internet will facilitate the participation of wider audiences in the development of forest policies and programmes. As a result, public administrations have additional reason to abandon top-down approaches in policy development and will need to take on the coordination or facilitation of bottom-up approaches.

New electronic communication technologies also have another advantage. For young people today, these technologies are more than tools; they are part of the culture. In most Western countries,



K. CRAMER

Mobile phones, with their capacity to send and receive text, have potential to become an increasingly important tool in public consultation

they are thought to have potential for offsetting the decline in voter participation, particularly among the younger generation. Using electronic communications in the development of forest programmes could be one way of enticing young people to participate and thus actively involving the future generations that will ultimately benefit from today's forest management decisions. ♦



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Guatemala's national forest programme – integrating agendas from the country's diverse forest regions

E. Oliva Hurtarte, E. Sales Hernández and I. Bustos García

A highlight of Guatemala's national forest programme is a focus on policy dialogue at the subnational level through Forest Policy Round Tables in the country's nine forest regions.

Guatemala's national forest programme (NFP) has been running continuously for 17 years. Formulation of the NFP began in 1989 under the name "Forest Action Plan for Guatemala" and has continued since 2003 under the title "National Forest Programme". This article outlines the advances that have been made in the implementation of the NFP, particularly:

- consensual formulation and approval of the National Forest Agenda for 2003–2012, which determines the actions that have to be implemented under the NFP for the development of the forest sector during that period;
- monitoring of international forest-related agreements;
- organization and implementation of new Forest Policy Round Tables in the country's nine forest regions.

The creation and operation of the Forest Policy Round Tables is especially important in a country of such great cultural diversity. The process of their organization and the progress they are making – for example in the definition of regional forest agendas – provide a solid basis for sustainable forest development.

THE SETTING

Guatemala's location in Central America on the bridge between two major continental masses (Figure 1), and its diversity in terms of soil, topography, rainfall, temperature, altitude, etc., are responsible for the presence of a wide range of ecosystems and species.

Guatemala has 3.9 million hectares of forest, accounting for 36 percent of its land area (FAO, 2006). Almost 70 percent of the forest area is concentrated in

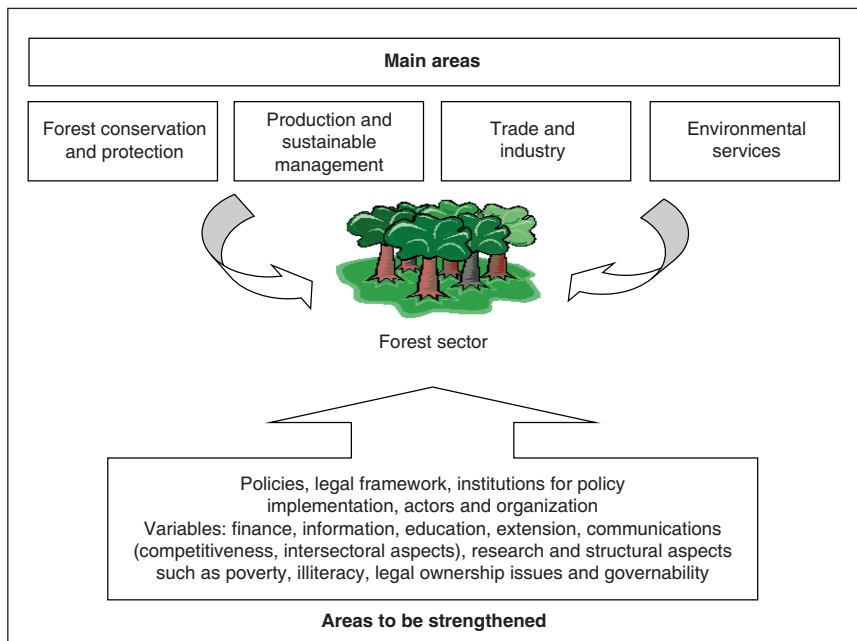
three departments – Petén (52 percent), Alta Verapaz (10 percent) and Izabal (7 percent) – and 54.6 percent of the total is located within protected areas. Some 37.8 percent of forest lands are State owned, 38 percent private property and 23.1 percent municipal or community property. Since 1990, about 54 000 ha of forests have been lost each year, while an average of 10 000 ha of plantations has been established each year.

The existence within the country of four major ethnic groups (Maya and Xinka indigenous groups, mestizos or ladinos, Afro-American Garifunas and whites) is an important sociodemographic feature. The Mayas are divided into 20 ethnic groups, with different languages and customs. Indeed, 23 languages are spoken in the country, and there are at least as many cultures. The country's multicultural wealth is of great significance in the

1
Geographical location of Guatemala



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2
Areas of National Forest Agenda activity

and one cross-sectoral support area (institution building). Proposed solutions to forest problems were adopted as the National Forest Agenda for 2003–2012 (Figure 2).

In view of the success of the Forest Action Plan in raising consciousness of the importance and problems of forest resources, promoting and implementing action and strengthening the linkages among forest-related institutions, INAB decided to support its continuation in the form of an NFP starting from 2003. Guatemala's NFP is based on the concept agreed on in 1997 within the international dialogue on forests, particularly the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). A permanent project to coordinate implementation of the NFP was created within the INAB structure.

design and implementation of forest and environmental policies, which must arise from a consensus of the population.

BACKGROUND: THE FOREST ACTION PLAN FOR GUATEMALA

In 1986, the Government of Guatemala applied for support from FAO to draw up a plan that would govern the use, management and conservation of forest resources, defining short-, medium- and long-term objectives, aims and strategies. In 1989 a start was thus made on drawing up the Forest Action Plan for Guatemala, with support from FAO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Germany, the Netherlands and the United States. In 1991 the basic document and project outline were submitted for consideration by the various national sectors. In March 1992 the plan was presented to the international community.

The Forest Action Plan for Guatemala had a ten-year time frame and remained in force until March 2003. It identified 29 actions and 17 projects covering five main areas: forestry in land use, fuel-

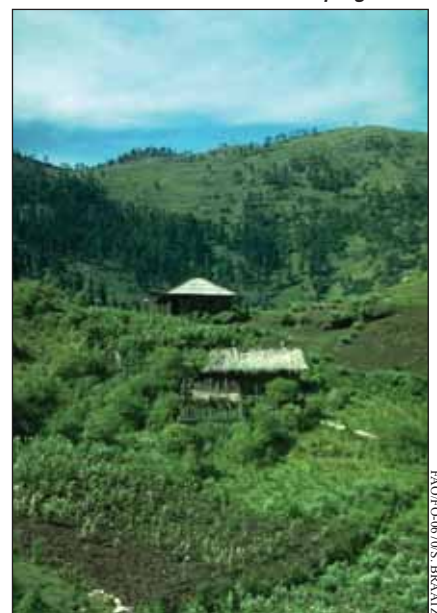
wood and energy, ecosystem conservation, forest industries, and institution building (MAGA and FAO, 2003).

EVOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMME

The Forest Action Plan for Guatemala was revised in late 2002 and early 2003. A consensual view of the country's forest sector was obtained through an analytical process involving 450 people from all over the country and from various sectors. Institutions managing the process included the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food; the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources; the National Council for Protected Areas; and the National Forest Institute (Instituto Nacional de Bosques, INAB). The process enjoyed input from individual and institutional advisers, expert and regional consultative bodies and a Forest Action Plan implementation office.

Revision of the Forest Action Plan for Guatemala focused on analysing and developing strategic objectives for four main areas of the forest sector (forest conservation and protection, production and sustainable management, trade and industry, and environmental services)

Agriculture and forest land: land-use planning is a key objective of Guatemala's national forest programme



FAO/FOA/TUNIS BRANTZ

It works in close relationship with local forest authorities and various organizations, particularly with the subnational Forest Policy Round Tables.

OBJECTIVES OF THE NFP

In Guatemala, the NFP is seen as a process for defining and agreeing on a new concept of forest and environmental development to be attained through participatory analysis, design, and implementation of the policy, strategy, mechanisms and actions proposed in the National Forest Agenda. Its aim is to achieve sustainable forest and environmental management, through sustainable productive and protective forest activities, so that “by the year 2012 the development of the Guatemalan forest sector will be based on principles of sustainability, thus contributing to human well-being and economic, social and environmental development; to land-use planning; and to the shaping of a forest culture within the country – through participatory management by all the stakeholders” (Programa Forestal Nacional de Guatemala, 2003). As part of the NFP framework, national legislation promotes forest development and is

fully in accord with the National Forest Agenda.

The specific objectives of the NFP are:

- to ensure space for dialogue and analysis in forestry;
- to establish a regulatory framework and guidelines for sustainable forest management;
- to identify strategies, actions and projects for development of the forest sector;
- to provide the forest sector with technical, financial, economic and institutional support to enable its public, private and community management – for example land-use planning, technical assistance, the Forest Education System (a network integrating forestry education institutions and the forest authority, for harmonization of programmes and policies), funding from the Forest Incentive Programme, and decentralized administration of forest resources involving municipalities, among others;
- to position issues of forests, their products and processes on the agenda of the country’s economic and social sectors;

- to foster a culture of forest production and conservation and contribute to land-use planning;
- to pilot discussions within forest fora to achieve consensus on the regulatory framework, the priority actions and how to implement them, and to establish synergies among the different actors pursuing forestry development and sustainable forest management.

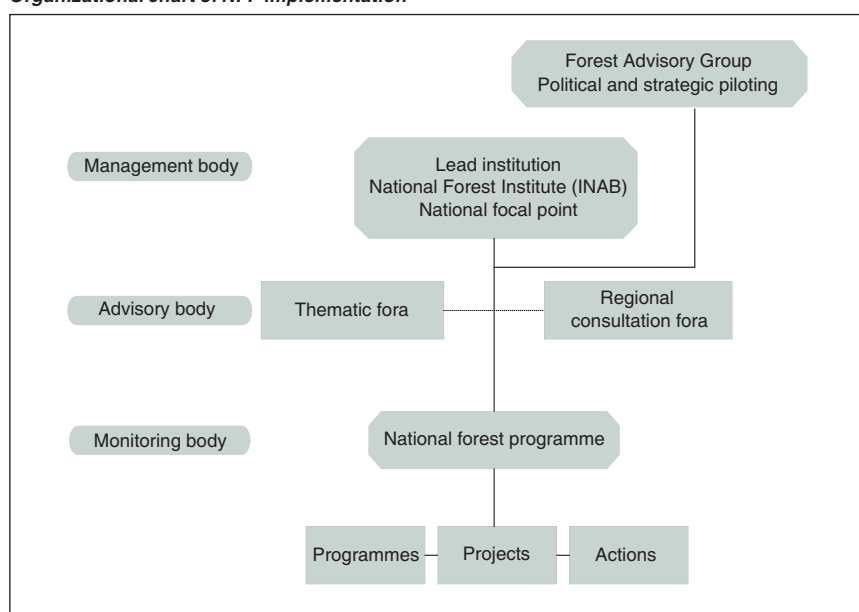
IMPLEMENTATION

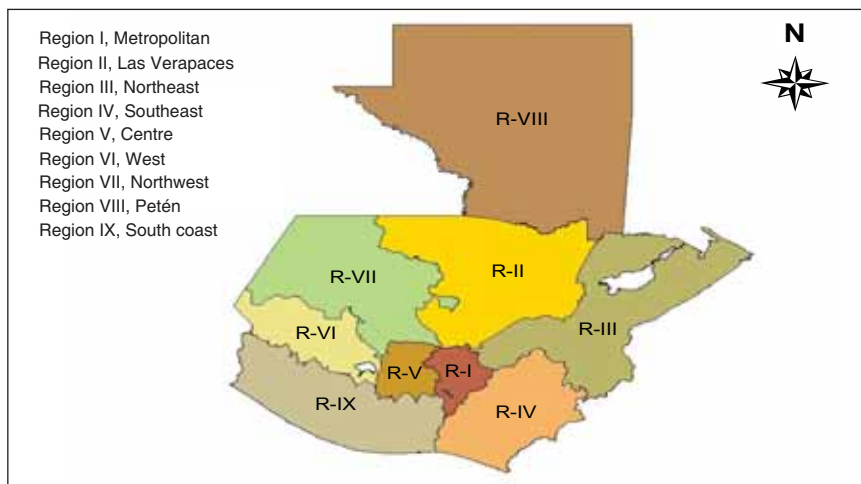
The NFP implementation strategy envisages three separate bodies responsible for management, advisory services and monitoring (see Figure 3). The NFP Implementation Support Project within INAB coordinates and supports the various actors implementing the NFP. It supports, for example:

- research, analysis and discussion on proposals for investment and allocation of technical and financial resources;
- the development of a portfolio of projects for implementing the National Forest Agenda;
- the operation and maintenance of a forest information system;
- an increase in forestry extension;
- technical support to public and private forest-sector bodies monitoring institutionalization of participatory planning and gender equality;
- monitoring of the implementation of the National Forest Agenda and the NFP in general.

In December 2003, INAB entered into a three-year cooperation agreement with the Netherlands to implement an institution-building strategy, including a component for support to NFP implementation with special emphasis on mechanisms for dialogue among institutions. The agreement addressed the demand for greater participation of interest groups, both thematic and geographical, in order to overcome the constraints of the legal framework and public forest management. The

3
Organizational chart of NFP implementation





4
Location of Guatemala's forest regions

most important constraints identified were:

- centralization and lack of accountability in decision-making;
- the lack of a broad, ongoing, participatory dialogue with local civil-society groups;
- the small importance attributed to cultural factors in forest management practices;
- the lack of mechanisms and incentives to ensure accountability of public management to society;
- the considerable effect of changes in government, which hamper continuity in agreed long-term policies and strategies and in trained technical staff;

- the weakness of the legal system in enforcing legislation and other forest regulations.

Public and private forest-sector interest groups were thus identified in each region, and relations were established between them and the national and regional authorities. This task entailed the establishment of formal agreements, the definition of internal rules of procedure and measures to obtain legal status. This led to the creation and strengthening of regional Forest Policy Round Tables and thematic fora addressing topics relevant to the organization of forestry activities, such as the National Standards Council for Sustainable Forest Management and the Environmental Services Group.

From the outset, medium- and long-

term plans were developed encompassing training of staff from local organizations in strategic planning, participatory appraisal to identify forest potential and problems, and the formulation of a forest development agenda for each region, including the preparation of strategic and operational plans, which have been progressively put into effect.

FOREST POLICY ROUND TABLES

Forest Policy Round Tables (*Mesas de concertación y política forestal*) are autonomous mechanisms for subnational dialogue, made up of about 30 organizations or groups including the central government, local authorities, NGOs, civil-society bodies and private companies involved in the production, conservation, protection and use of forest resources. Their aim is to promote socio-economic development through activities in line with national forest policy and to find solutions to problems affecting the sector within the framework of regional forest agendas.

Following the establishment of the first Forest Policy Round Table, the Las Verapaces Round Table, in 2002, INAB began to promote round tables on the same model through information activities and provision of organizational and technical support and financial resources. Round tables have since been set up in each of the nine forest regions defined by INAB (Figure 4).

Forest Policy Round Tables at work in Regions I and III



E. OLIVA



Mayan woman going to collect fuelwood: Guatemala's NFP considers the diversity of forest stakeholders to overcome longstanding causes of resource degradation and involve them in sound and sustainable forest management and use

Conceptual, methodological and operational guidelines were drawn up and regional presentations were made on the NFP process and the National Forest Agenda to the various stakeholders. The round tables were planned and established with input from local stakeholders.

The Forest Policy Round Tables are relevant to the geographic, cultural and productive features of each of the country's regions. They also act as advisory bodies for feedback on the NFP in general and the National Forest Agenda in particular, contributing not only to sustainable management of forests and forest land, but also to environmental sustainability in general and to good governance.

The Forest Policy Round Tables:

- discuss, analyse and propose solutions to the forest problems of their individual regions, facilitating dialogue among the various actors in the forest sector and other sectors concerned with forest management at both the regional and national levels;
- support the formulation of national forest policy, and propose and imple-

ment actions needed to strengthen the regional and national forest services to this end;

- promote optimal use of the regions' forest potential for socio-economic development and job creation through diversification of productive structures and services and the formulation, design and management of regional and national forest projects;
- propose and implement activities to train staff and build their capacities so that they can undertake better jobs throughout the forest sector.

Achievements in implementing Forest Policy Round Tables

The creation of the round tables – in itself a major achievement in terms of the importance and progressive influence of these participatory mechanisms – has allowed progress to be made in establishing dialogue at the regional and national levels to focus on the improvement and sustainability of forest management processes and Guatemala's forest development in general. Other achievements include:

- joint involvement of regional actors from the public and private sectors, universities, cooperatives, NGOs, community organizations and aid agencies, focusing on forests;
- recognition that the Forest Policy Round Tables are representative of the forest sector in their respective areas;
- formulation of regional forest development agendas, following the example of the agenda agreed by the Las Verapaces Forest Policy Round Table;
- dissemination of the National Forest Policy and the National Forest Agenda.

SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMME FACILITY

The National Forest Programme Facility supports Guatemala's NFP through a three-year partnership set up with INAB in February 2004. Through this arrangement, ten organizations of peasant farmers and indigenous people, NGOs and university institutions have carried out participatory activities to strengthen the Forest Policy Round Tables, formulate and launch departmental and local plans and agendas for sustainable forest management, improve forestry education and boost forest certification by supporting the determination of national standards for sustainable forest management. Preparations are currently under way to launch new activities for six more organizations. It is notable that in Guatemala the Facility funds have never been used by the government institution, INAB, but have rather been allocated by INAB to these partner organizations to broaden and increase the participation of various national and local stakeholders in the NFP.

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR NFP IMPLEMENTATION

National and regional forest stakeholders have raised a series of issues for implementation of the NFP in terms of pursuing the National Forest Agenda and

improving conditions for social, economic and environmental development by enhancing the role of forestry at the regional and local levels. They have particularly emphasized the following challenges:

- improvement of living conditions, job generation and incomes for families, communities and regions through the production of forest goods and services;
- organization of economic and financial resources and other necessary conditions to implement the priority projects on regional agendas, involving a greater number of better-trained actors;
- involvement of multiple sectors in formulating and implementing policies and strategies that are well coordinated at the national and regional levels and that further sustainable forest management;
- regional-level consolidation and institutionalization of the Forest Policy Round Tables as lead forest agencies in the nine regions;
- promotion of a “forest culture” that, while taking into account the social, economic and ethnic diversity and different interests of the various stakeholders, involves them all in the sustainable use and sound management of forests and watersheds, with the aim of overcoming longstanding and complex causes of resource degradation.

CONCLUSIONS

Seventeen continuous years of participatory formulation and implementation of the Forest Action Plan for Guatemala and the NFP demonstrate the constant interest of successive national governments and the various stakeholders in carrying this process forward. Important achievements of the NFP include:

- letters of agreement with the National Forest Programme Facility and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) to support

programme and project investment and execution;

- development of an institution-building strategy for INAB, with support from the Netherlands;
- monitoring of Central American forestry strategy and international agreements on forests;
- revision and modification of the regulations governing forestry administration;
- improvement of forestry curricula;
- organization and implementation of Forest Policy Round Tables.

It is especially noteworthy that the various actors have adopted the principles and aims of the NFP, a factor that encouraged the creation of the Forest Policy Round Tables in all the country’s forest regions. These round tables have already begun to contribute to well-planned forestry development and will be increasingly successful inasmuch as they spring from the very roots of the country’s rich cultural diversity. ♦



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Community of Practice on Forest Financing in Latin America

One of the major challenges for implementing national forest programmes (NFPs) is to fund sustainable forest management. Traditional markets and existing mechanisms (e.g. credit lines and tax incentives) are a good start but are frequently not sufficient to make sustainable forestry competitive with other types of land use, especially where native forests are concerned. Facing this situation, some Latin American countries, such as Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica and Mexico, are at the forefront of developing, testing and applying new financing mechanisms (such as payment for environmental services) as well as improving existing ones (such as forest-related securities) in order to increase forest financing opportunities.

As these country initiatives evolve, another challenge is to gather, analyse and make available the new information, experiences and knowledge on forest financing to local, national, regional and international levels.

To promote innovation in financing and to share information among the national forest programmes of Latin American countries, FAO, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), with support from the Netherlands, Germany and the leading institutions responsible for national forest programmes in 18 Latin American countries, established in 2005 a knowledge-management partnership called the Community of Practice on Forestry Financing in Latin America. Other institutions are gradually joining in, including Tropenbos International, the National Forest Programme Facility, the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), the Brazilian Silviculture Society and Forest Trends.

Two initiatives, an FAO/Netherlands/IUCN project and a German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ)/ACTO Amazon project, are currently supporting the Community of Practice by promoting national studies on forest financing. Studies have already been completed in Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica and Mexico and are under preparation in 14 other countries. Both projects use similar

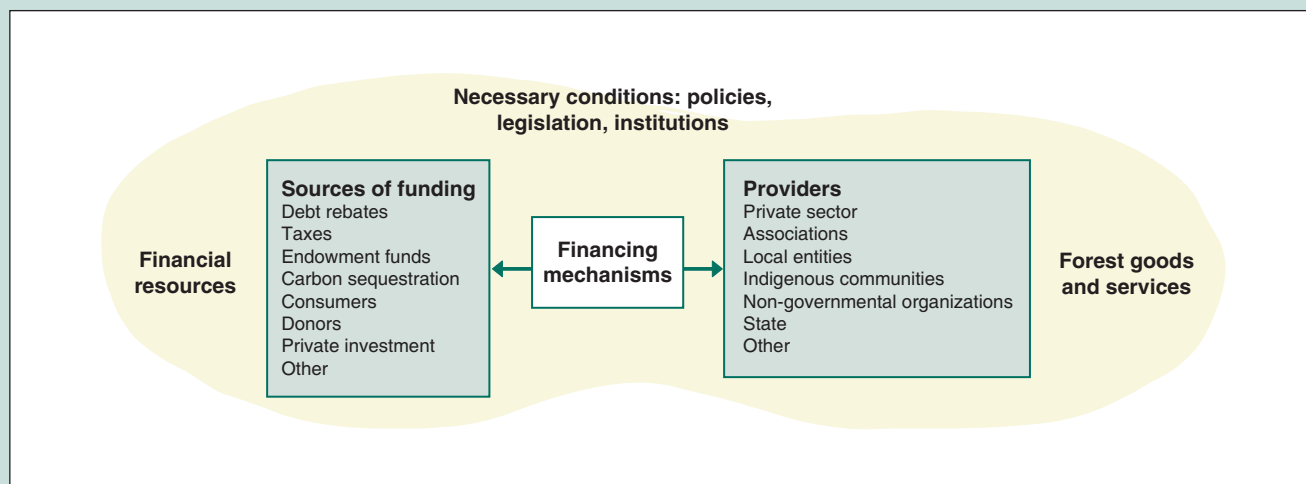
methodologies and coordinate their activities through the Community of Practice.

The Community of Practice is helping national institutions develop comprehensive national financing strategies as an element of their national forest programmes. Basically a national strategy for forest financing consists of an overall vision of all the financial needs and means to promote the sustainable use and conservation of forests in a given country according to its policy and development objectives. The strategy should provide guidance to policy-makers and forest stakeholders on how to finance, in the short and long term, planned activities for sustainable forest management, taking into consideration the many uses of forest resources and ecosystems. Brazil and Costa Rica are examples of countries whose NFP processes are implementing such strategies.

The success of a national strategy for forest financing depends on its capacity to bundle together feasible alternatives for forest financing in a single planning tool. To be complete, it must identify the conditions and changes required for the financing mechanisms to operate (see Figure). It needs to identify all potential goods and services that the country's forests can provide (not only timber) and all their possible providers (right side of the Figure). Accordingly it identifies potential sources of funding for the various goods and services (left side of the Figure). The strategy then proposes ways to link the providers and the recipients (i.e. those who are willing to pay) in the most efficient and effective way. This can only succeed, however, if the policy, legal and institutional conditions are in place for attracting funds towards sustainable forest management.

The Community of Practice has so far elicited a number of important lessons.

- Countries are discussing many ideas for innovative financing mechanisms, but their implementation remains scanty, probably because the requisite conditions (policy, legal, institutional) are not yet in place. The countries in the region differ markedly in their level of advancement in this field, which translates into a good opportunity for knowledge sharing.
- A general lack of data about the financial



flows in the forest sector in Latin America hampers the understanding of forest financing mechanisms. The development of new financing mechanisms is also complicated by lack of knowledge about the value of services (e.g. biodiversity conservation) and of some non-wood forest products, and about consumers' willingness to pay for them. Hence, the valuation of goods and services that are not currently marketed remains an important aspect of a strategy for forest financing.

- Financing mechanisms in forestry seem to function particularly well when applied at the local level (e.g. in a specific district or watershed), where identification of stakeholders, negotiation and monitoring are relatively easy, permitting operational transparency.
- Forest financing provides further opportunities to strengthen the relationship of forestry with other sectors, especially finance and planning.

International interest in the Latin American experience on forest financing seems to be growing. Therefore, the Community of Practice and its partners are also exploring opportunities for exchange of experience and knowledge outside the region. A first effort was an interregional workshop for this type of exchange among Asian and Latin American countries, held in Chiang Mai, Thailand in November 2006. A similar initiative is being planned for 2007 for Latin American and

African countries, and there will certainly be other initiatives of this sort.

More information about the Community of Practice on Forest Financing in Latin America is available at: www.fao.org/forestry/mecanismosfinancieros

*Model of national strategies
for financing multipurpose
forest management*

The Puembo process: strengthening the dialogue on forests in Latin America and the Caribbean

W. Thies, J. Rodríguez and E. von Pfeil

A regional initiative to strengthen national forest programmes and regional organizations as a bridge between the national and international levels.

Protecting and managing forests today is no longer so much a technical issue (most countries now having the necessary technical expertise), but a policy and governance issue, necessitating civil society participation in decision-making, adequate legislation and law enforcement. National forest programmes (NFPs) provide a means to address the political dimension of sustainable forest management by involving all stakeholders in a country that have an interest in forests.

However, in a globalizing world, forest protection and management have increasingly become a matter of dialogue among countries, both because the world is realizing that forest services provide global benefits (such as stabilizing the climate) and because countries recognize that many forest problems go beyond national borders. NFPs are therefore also a reference point for policy dialogue at the regional level.

The importance of countries acting together when formulating forest policies has been widely recognized in Latin America and the Caribbean. National forest policies are increasingly influenced by international agreements on forests. However, although several Latin American countries have formulated NFPs, there has been little interaction among countries or between the international level where forest-related negotiations take place and the national level where internationally agreed actions should be implemented.

The Puembo process was created to provide countries in Latin America a platform for dialogue:

- to explore how to develop and use NFPs as participatory, multisectoral stakeholder processes that take

Protecting and managing Latin America's forests has increasingly become a matter of dialogue among countries

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into account the various functions of forests and are well integrated in national development plans;

- to discuss shared agendas for development and action in the countries and among them;
- to explore how NFPs can be used in implementation of international forest-related agreements.

Through discussion of common issues, identification of topics that could benefit from joint action, work on transboundary solutions, and exchange of information on best practices, the process aims to strengthen NFP processes as well as regional organizations as a bridge between the national and international levels. The idea is to improve the information and knowledge flow among countries and the coordination of action between the countries and the various regional and international processes. The objective is to increase political attention to forests, especially regarding their contribution to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals 1 (“Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”) and 7 (“Ensure environmental sustainability”).

THE PROCESS

The Puenbo process began from a workshop held in Puenbo, Ecuador in 2002, called by the Ministry for Environment of Ecuador and supported by the Netherlands and Germany, on Implementation of International Forest-Related Agreements through National Forest Programmes in Latin America. The nine Latin American countries that participated – Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru – formulated a commitment to joint action to support NFP processes.

Participants noted that to strengthen the NFP processes in the countries, there was a need to advance on issues such as dialogue with other sectors, capacity development for stakeholders in decentralized organizations, better participation of civil society, integration of the

forest sector in national development and poverty reduction strategies, development of innovative financing strategies for sustainable forest management, and coordination between actions at the national level and decisions taken in international and regional fora.

After presentation of the workshop results in numerous international fora (the Latin American Forestry Congress, the sixth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity [CBD], FAO’s Latin America and Caribbean Forestry Commission [LACFC] and the fourth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests [UNFF]), participating countries and regional organizations requested a continuation of the Puenbo process.

In November 2005, the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), the Southern Cone Subregional Group of LACFC, the Dutch Ministry for Foreign Affairs (DGIS) and the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Devel-

opment (BMZ) launched the Puenbo II Initiative to strengthen the dialogue on forests within and among countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. They proposed including more countries in the process and broadening the scope to include biodiversity issues, intersectoral approaches and overall poverty reduction goals. Subsequently almost all Latin American countries joined the Puenbo II Initiative (see Map).

Four themes were identified as crucial for sustainable forest management and necessary to take up in Puenbo II:

- governance and institutional capacity (legal issues, decentralization, participation, transparency, stakeholders);
- forest valuation and financing mechanisms for sustainable forest management;
- impact of other sectors (e.g. finance, agriculture, mining, tourism) on forests and vice versa;
- the international forest arrangement (e.g. UNFF) and national implementation.

Members of the Puenbo II Initiative





Working groups of NFP focal points and others during Southern Cone subregional workshop in Santiago, Chile exchanging lessons learned from national studies and identifying common issues

Although regional cooperation in Latin American forestry is not new, what is new about the Puenbo approach is that it does not only work with regional organizations or countries, but links both to the international dialogue on forests – by linking the countries' development of NFPs with the implementation of regional and international commitments, and by contributing to the regional agendas on forest development of ACTO, CCAD and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR). The Puenbo process also seeks to improve coordination among these existing regional processes.

COORDINATION AND ACTIVITIES

The three founding regional organizations, ACTO, CCAD and FAO (through LACFC), guide the initiative and define priorities for its topics and projects. These organizations strengthen the forest networks in the region, improve relations among the national, regional and international levels, and strengthen the political dialogue between member countries and the different sectors that impact on forests. They receive support from FAO, the National Forest Programme Facility, Germany and the Netherlands.

The initiative is politically guided by a Steering Committee which consists of representatives of ACTO, CCAD, LACFC, DGIS and BMZ. The Steering Committee is assisted by a Tech-

nical Support Group which includes representatives of the National Forest Programme Facility, FAO, ACTO, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Netherlands. The Technical Support Group is responsible for the coordination and facilitation of the initiative, together with the Executive Secretariat which is managed by GTZ.

Participation is not exclusive to countries that are members of the participating organizations. Other potential partners such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the World Bank are invited to contribute to the process. Future cooperation with MERCOSUR is planned (see below).

Key interventions to date have included the following:

- **National studies.** Based on the initiative's four key themes, the participating countries prepared analyses of their NFPs between March and October 2006, taking into account the opinions of all forest stakeholders.
- **Subregional workshops.** Between October and December 2006, two subregional workshops (one in Central America, the other in South America) were organized to exchange lessons learned from the national studies and discuss common topics in order to formulate approaches, proposals and recommendations for the national and regional levels. The Central American workshop successfully integrated

several regional and multilateral organizations such as the Coordinating Association of Indigenous and Rural People for Community Agro-forestry in Central America (ACICAFOC), IUCN Central America, the World Bank and FAO and created ownership for the process among participants. Participants identified common strengths and weaknesses in the forest dialogue at the national level (see Table) and agreed on continuing actions in their countries to address them with support from the Puenbo process.

In 2007 a region-wide conference will be organized to exchange lessons learned among the countries and subregions and to formulate messages and recommendations for development and implementation of NFPs in the countries and for the regional and international level. High-level decision-makers are expected to participate; thus the conference will focus on fostering political commitment, mainly in the framework of the first and seventh MDGs, and on increasing synergies with international processes such as UNFF and the international conventions on biodiversity, desertification and climate change. The outcomes will be presented in international processes and shared with UN organizations, NGOs, private sector-organizations and leaders from other regions and sectors, enabling integration of the outcomes into other policy processes.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Only half a year after the start of the Puenbo II Initiative, participating countries have stated that the Puenbo process has created a “common language” and a common understanding of forest issues among countries. They have begun to talk about the four Puenbo key themes and to identify topics within the themes that are relevant to them but also to the region.

The following needs have been identified by all countries:

- intensification of the forest dialogue, especially with sectors that are not directly related to the forest sector but have a clear interest in forests (such as tourism, agriculture, finance), through the creation of forest round tables which will also serve as a mechanism for preparing recommendations for the regional and international levels;
- decentralization of the dialogue to provincial and departmental levels;
- strengthening of institutions to guide such multi-actor, multisectoral dialogue.

The subjects of forest dialogue vary from country to country, but areas such as illegal logging and criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management were identified as relevant to most countries and relevant for discussion at the regional level.

Several regional and multilateral organizations (the National Forest Programme Facility, IUCN South, ACICAFOC, the Regional Alliance for Forest Biodiversity coordinated by the CBD Secretariat and the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center [CATIE], the World Bank and the Central American Council for Agriculture) have already integrated or have shown interest in integrating their topics into the Puenbo process, indicating the need for such a regional platform for dialogue on forests and NFPs. LACFC has included support to the Puenbo process and its four key themes in its Biannual Mesoamerican Work Plan.

Strengths and weaknesses of the national forest dialogue identified in the subregional workshop for Central America, October 2006

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|--|---|
| Progress in acknowledging multiple functions of forests (beyond timber production) in national forest development strategies | Continued inward-looking focus of the forest sector |
| More frequent inclusion of all forest-sector stakeholders in decision-making, establishing a basis for negotiations between civil society, the private sector and government | Absence of a common national vision for forests |
| | Lack of visibility of forests in national budgets |
| | Exclusion of other sectors such as economy, finance, agriculture, tourism, mining, etc. from the dialogue, reducing chances to promote forests as a crucial driver of social and economic development |

The four Puenbo key themes and the results of the national studies prepared during the Puenbo II Initiative constitute a basis for the new Strategic Regional Forest Programme (Programa Estratégico Regional Forestal, PERFOR) presented for approval to the Central American Forest Committee of CCAD. PERFOR will be one of the programmes implementing the Environmental Plan of the Central American Region (Programa Ambiental para Centroamérica) under the Central American Forest Strategy (Estrategia Forestal Centroamericana). The World Bank, which will finance a regional initiative on forest law enforcement and governance under PERFOR, has consequently integrated the Puenbo objectives in its planning.

In the Southern Cone area, MERCOSUR, especially its Working Group on Environment, has shown interest in supporting the Puenbo process in its member countries. MERCOSUR, like CCAD and ACTO, could provide the networks necessary to strengthen the dialogue on forest issues among member countries.

OUTLOOK

The Puenbo II Initiative has a duration of two years, until the end of 2007. To continue the momentum, efforts are under way to promote the ideas and objectives of the process among regional organizations, NGOs and other bi- and multilateral donors and to secure financing to continue activities after 2007. Early encouraging signs are the inter-

est that several regional organizations have shown in integrating their objectives with those of the Puenbo process. For example, the Puenbo process will serve as a platform for follow-up of the FAO Workshop on Intersectoral Planning of Forest-Related Policies in Central America, held in October 2006 in Costa Rica.

At the national level, the NFP focal points, with support from the Puenbo II Technical Support Group, will discuss the outcomes of the subregional workshops at national participatory workshops and define follow-up activities to be implemented before the regional Puenbo conference in 2007, such as integrating the results of the subregional workshop in Central America in national policies and identifying national topics that should be taken up and treated by regional organizations.

Further information about the Puenbo II Initiative can be found at: www.puenbo.org ♦

Harmonization of forest policies and programmes in Central Africa

J.P. Koyo and R. Foteu

The Convergence Plan of the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC) provides a framework for harmonizing forest policies and programmes and serves as a basis for the formulation of national forest programmes.

The development of harmonized forest policies and programmes for managing forest ecosystems and conserving their biodiversity is an enduring concern of the international community and national governments.

This is the context of various initiatives seeking to develop criteria, principles, standards and technical parameters for forest management, such as the Forest Principles adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), sustainable forest management guidelines, and international agreements and conventions related to forests. The same concern is seen in the deliberations of the international forest dialogue over the past ten years with a view to setting up a legal instrument concerning forest management at the global level.

In Central Africa, the harmonization of forest policies is the common denominator in the objectives of every subregional cooperation initiative concerning the forest sector. This is perhaps inevitable for countries sharing the same forest ecosystems and desiring to pool their efforts to ensure their sustainable management. Areas where the countries of the subregion (see Map) have similar institutional needs for improvement include:

- involvement of rural populations and other stakeholders in the planning and management of forest resources and their use;
- linking forest development programmes with programmes for socio-economic development in general or rural development in particular;
- promotion and industrialization of forest products;

- promotion of networks and fora for technical and scientific exchange;
- sustainable financial mechanisms for forestry development;
- national forest inventories and collection of forest data;
- forestry education and research.

Central African States have a number of advantages that foster consistency in their forest management efforts. For example:

- Political will concerning the need to harmonize forest policies has been revitalized and consolidated in two summits of Heads of State, in Yaoundé, Cameroon in 1999 and Brazzaville, Congo in 2005. During the Brazzaville summit, all the participating Heads of State signed a legally binding treaty on forest conservation and forest sustainable management in Central Africa.
- There is a convergence of viewpoints and efforts regarding forests among Central African countries and their main forest partners, who have grouped together for concerted action in the Congo Basin Forest Partnership.
- On the basis of their shared features and their long experience in cooperation, especially in forestry planning, Central African countries are involved in a process of regional economic integration through the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (EMCCA), which has made forests a focus.
- Central African countries are signatories of almost all international agreements and conventions concerning forests and the environment.

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- Forest reforms carried out by Central African countries over the past ten years have many similarities, especially in institutional and regulatory terms.
- The African Timber Organization (ATO) principles, criteria and indicators for the sustainable forest management of African natural tropical forests, developed with the support of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), provide an important basis for aligning forest management practices.
- The subregion has had experience in applying common rules to biodiversity conservation through the recent establishment of joint management of transboundary protected areas.

The Heads of State of Central Africa have moved harmonization of forest policies to centre stage by making it the priority thrust of the Convergence Plan approved at their second summit in Brazzaville, Congo. It is believed that consistency in sustainable forest management will foster flexibility in implementation of the Convergence Plan. However, differences in the tools for forest development and management hamper the development of synergies among these countries.

HARMONIZING POLICIES

Policy harmonization is a progressive process in which the stakeholders first identify and prioritize a certain number of common concerns, and then agree on ways, means and necessary stages for resolving them.

It is thus not necessarily a question of homogenization or uniformity, but rather of a comparative approach aimed at identifying divergent aspects and targeting those areas where it is possible to make progressive adjustments in order to refine forest management tools and instruments. Acquired experience and the specific nature of the various ecosystems must be taken into account. The process must culminate in guidelines for achieving consistency,

COMIFAC member countries



which can be supported in various ways with institutional arrangements, legislation, targeted action programmes, etc.

The procedure must be dynamic and flexible in order to encompass any possible modification needed in view of the different situations that may arise and experience gained.

Ownership of the process by the stakeholders and regular monitoring and verification of the results are indispensable. Similarly, a technical body at the subregional level is required to ensure monitoring and arbitration.

CONVERGENCE PLAN

At the end of their first summit on forests in Yaoundé in 1999, the Heads of State of Central Africa issued a joint statement, the Yaoundé Declaration, making a commitment to unite their efforts to ensure conservation and sustainable management of their forest ecosystems, which constitute the second largest tropical forest bloc on the planet (the Congo Basin forests).

The 12 resolutions contained in the

Yaoundé Declaration deal with almost all aspects of modern forestry, and the Heads of State have set themselves an ambitious goal of bringing the subregion's forests irrevocably under sustainable management.

An especially innovative element of the Yaoundé Declaration was the introduction of joint management of transboundary protected areas. The importance of this step lies in the fact that it represents the first example of joint community management of forest areas by different countries. Collective management of transboundary areas is also a strategy for combating the extraction of and illegal trade in forest products and ensuring the security of borders, and could thus contribute to maintaining peace.

Following this initiative, the first challenge facing the ministers responsible for forests – and now in charge of follow-up – was to translate the resolutions of the Heads of State into practice by putting in place various legislative and institutional arrangements and the planning necessary for this purpose. It was particularly

FAO – assisting forest policy coordination of COMIFAC countries

In March 2003, following a request from the Executive Secretariat of COMIFAC, FAO initiated a project to provide financial and technical support for updating and operationalizing the COMIFAC Convergence Plan. In this way FAO was also responding positively to General Assembly Resolution 54/214 of December 1999, which called on the international community to support the countries of the Yaoundé process in their forest development efforts.

In addition to project assistance directly aimed at support to COMIFAC and the Convergence Plan, FAO on its own or with partners assists COMIFAC countries in implementing a number of activities related to the strategic thrusts of the Convergence Plan. Through country projects, for example, FAO supports agroforestry and peri-urban plantations for fuelwood and construction wood in Burundi; participatory management and conservation of mangrove biodiversity in Cameroon; the formulation of a national strategy for urban and peri-urban forestry in Bangui, Central African Republic; and community forestry in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Subregional projects include support to the Central Africa World Heritage Forest Initiative and enhancing food security through non-wood forest products in Central Africa. Within the framework of its support strategy in the Congo Basin, the forestry component of the FAO/Netherlands Partnership Programme (FNPP) supports the harmonization of forest policies, legislation, institutions and monitoring systems of the participating countries.

The opening of a new FAO Subregional Office for Central Africa in Libreville, Gabon in October 2006 will facilitate FAO's efforts in the subregion.

important to establish a consensus (using a participatory approach) on an action programme encompassing all the initiatives under way and involving all the stakeholders in its implementation.

The approach adopted by the experts was to develop and put in place a set of actions to serve as a reference point for defining the interventions of the various partners. The term "Convergence Plan" was therefore adopted as a title for this planning document, which would express the shared view of the countries involved in forest planning.

The first version of the Convergence Plan was drawn up in October 1999 and then approved in December 2000 by the first session of the Conference of Ministers in Charge of Forests in Central Africa (COMIFAC, now called the Central African Forests Commission). The participating countries have adopted it as a framework document in developing their own national components.

The plan was updated in 2003 with support from FAO (see Box). The last version of the plan was approved successively by the Conference of Ministers (May 2004), all the stakeholders in the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (June 2004) and finally the summit of Heads of State in Brazzaville (February 2005).

The ten-year cost of implementing the plan has been estimated at around US\$1.5 billion, and priorities were set in a three-year action plan (2004–2006).

The Convergence Plan is thus the outcome of an iterative planning exercise and acknowledged by all the partners and stakeholders as a good framework for forest activities and programmes in the Central African region, in line with the Yaoundé Declaration. It has the added value of:

- channelling forest management efforts towards sustainable development;
- familiarizing the countries con-

cerned with community forest management;

- serving as a basis for the formulation of national forest programmes.

Structure

The basic framework of the Convergence Plan consists of ten strategic thrusts, which express the operational orientation of the Yaoundé Declaration resolutions. The ten thrusts are articulated in a set of tools, measures and actions to be put in place at the regional and subregional levels.

The Convergence Plan has two sets of components: cross-cutting actions to be carried out by all the participating countries, and devolved actions to be implemented by each country individually. The countries are thus the crucible for implementation of the Yaoundé Declaration.

The three-year operational plan lists the necessary parameters for implementing each action: the goal, anticipated results, stages, activities to be carried out, indicators to verify progress, means of implementation, stakeholders involved, etc. There is also a system for monitoring implementation of the plan, and an evaluation is presented at each COMIFAC Ordinary Council meeting.

COMIFAC'S APPROACH TO HARMONIZING FOREST POLICIES AND MONITORING SYSTEMS

Since June 2005 COMIFAC has been engaged in harmonizing forest policies and monitoring and evaluation systems, with support from FAO (see Box). This process consists of developing a number of normative and legal instruments to ensure subregional consistency in forest management. The anticipated results of this process are:

- harmonized forest policies, institutions, legislation, taxation systems, norms, standards, etc.
- adoption and implementation of a subregional convention on forest monitoring and combating illegal

activities including poaching, especially in border areas;

- establishment of a system to gather, process and share forest-related information;
- adoption of a strategy to involve local people and NGOs in forest management.

The approach adopted by COMIFAC entails six essential stages.

- **Stage 1: Evaluation of the forest sector for each country.** National reports identify the strengths and weaknesses of the management system and recommend adjustments to be made at the national level. They evaluate two facets: first, forest policies; second, monitoring and evaluation of forestry activities, efforts to combat illegal activities and poaching, forest statistics and involvement of stakeholders in forest management.
- **Stage 2: National consensus.** All the national forest planning stakeholders consolidate and validate the national report in a national forum. The participants must agree on the modifications needed to ensure that national forest management instruments are sufficiently solid and stable for creating subregional cohesion. They must also pinpoint aspects suitable for subregional harmonization, and identify national-level problems that would benefit from subregional synergy for their solution.
- **Stage 3: Regional review.** A chart is drawn up of all countries' proposals, and the various ways, means and approaches needed to harmonize forest management instruments. The national reports on the two themes, harmonization of forest policies and forest control, are synthesized in two regional reports and submitted to a regional forum attended by representatives of government, NGOs, the private sector, bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies and civil society. These stakeholders agree

on the points to be harmonized and the appropriate steps, as well as on the various adjustments to be made at the national level.

- **Stage 4: Priority setting.** A COMIFAC policy body, the Ministerial Council, prioritizes and chooses the aspects that are to be addressed at the supranational level and also identifies an arbitration mechanism.
- **Stage 5: Formulation of a regional convention on forest control.** The convention will address illegal exploitation of forest resources, including illegal logging and poaching.
- **Stage 6: Formulation and implementation of an action programme.** This stage entails development of supports for harmonization—criteria, guidelines, standards, strategies, institutional arrangements, etc.—based on COMIFAC's priorities.

Achievements in policy harmonization

At present, four of the stages described above have been achieved. It is planned to complete the remaining two in 2007.

Activities concerning policy harmonization got under way in June 2005 with the formulation of national reports.

In October 2005, a subregional workshop including civil society participants evaluated the national reports and recommended adjustments with a view to their finalization in national fora. Participants were asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the draft reports concerning forest management instruments in order to formulate concrete recommendations.

A second subregional workshop to prepare for national fora, organized in February 2006 by FAO's project for assistance to COMIFAC with support from the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), capitalized on the experiences of institutions for subregional integration in harmonizing policies and pinpointed key points of interest.

Building on the results obtained at

national fora, an Extraordinary Council of COMIFAC held in Libreville, Gabon in April 2006 recommended speeding up the regional review so that the subregional discussion could be held as soon as possible and an action programme be proposed at the following council meeting.

The subregional forum, held in Douala, Cameroon in September 2006, approved 17 foci of interest as well as relevant methodologies and operational approaches for developing harmonization supports. The recommendations from the subregional forum were adopted by an Extraordinary Council of COMIFAC in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, on 28 November 2006.

CONCLUSION

With the two summits of Heads of State held 1999 and 2005, the adoption of the Convergence Plan by the main actors in the forest sector including the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, and the first steps in its implementation, the forest dialogue in Central Africa is off to a good start. It is too soon to evaluate what effect this process will have on forests and those who depend on them. But the important point at this stage is that the process for working towards sustainable forest management is in place and has been politically accepted by the forestry leaders of all countries in the subregion. The collaborative efforts of the countries to harmonize their forest policies and their implementation through aligned national forest programmes will surely pave the way for improved forest management. ♦

The national forest programme in Senegal: developing decentralized planning and management capacities

O. Diaw

Senegal's national forest programme emphasizes capacity building within a decentralized institutional framework for effective implementation of programmes to curb desertification, deforestation, forest and soil degradation and biodiversity loss, while also targeting livelihood support and poverty reduction.

The role of Senegal's central government changed as a result of sweeping reforms carried out in the 1990s which introduced a new decentralized administrative structure. With many forest management responsibilities shifted to regional and local institutions and communities, a key role of the national forest service is to boost decentralized capacities for planning and management.

This article describes the process of decentralization in the forest sector, the distribution of authority for natural resource management, and the achievements and ongoing activities of the national forest programme – with support from the National Forest Programme Facility – in pursuit of sustainable forest management for the whole country.

BACKGROUND

Senegal has a semi-arid Sahelian climate. Although rainfall varies considerably from year to year, in general it has been declining for about 30 years. Years of drought have contributed directly to a degradation of natural resources.

Apart from the unfavourable climate in most of the country, human activities have also had negative impacts on forest resources, for example through frequent bush fires which degrade soil already impoverished by inappropriate farming practices, overgrazing connected especially with transhumance, extensive livestock rearing, unsustainable fuelwood extraction and illegal cutting in the most densely wooded areas (often provoked by poverty) and agricultural clearing and farming within reserved forests. The result is loss of biological

diversity, forest degradation and decline in production of wood and non-wood forest products. Forest cover has receded by an estimated 45 000 ha per year since 1990 (FAO, 2006).

Classified forests, reforestation and rehabilitation areas, strict natural reserves, special reserves and national parks, which cover more than 6 million hectares accounting for 31.7 percent of the country, are managed by the national forest service (the Directorate of Water, Forests, Hunting and Soil Conservation) and the Directorate of National Parks, both in the Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection, with decentralized structures having an important role. Protected forests not included in the classified category are managed by local communities.

EVOLVING STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES TO FOREST MANAGEMENT

The forest resource conservation policy begun during the colonial period and maintained after independence in 1960 referred exclusively to the responsibilities of the national forest service, created in 1935. The national forest service carried out activities related to forest protection, grazing bans and forestry operations in the dry zone and reforestation and enrichment in closed forests, while severely enforcing a restrictive Forest Code that greatly limited people's use of forest resources.

The 1981 Forest Development Master Plan and the 1993 Forest Action Plan, created with the assistance of FAO, facilitated the introduction of changes that would enable Senegal to address

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the issues and challenges addressed in the international conventions adopted at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) – including deforestation, land degradation, lack of fuelwood and domestic energy and biodiversity loss.

The legal framework for forest management was revised with a new Forest Code, adopted in 1995, comprising the Forest Law and its companion Regulation. It was designed to stimulate a participatory approach in natural resource management. New approaches fostering community, village and private reforestation efforts and emphasizing the training of the local population have been strongly encouraged. Furthermore, actors and institutions dealing with forestry are now more open to input from other disciplines such as economics, agriculture, livestock raising and pastoralism, and sociology and rural outreach.

These approaches have made it possible to motivate the local population to dedicate time and energy to the development, protection and rehabilitation of forest resources. Further incentive has been provided by projects and programmes funded through bilateral and multilateral cooperation with many countries. For example over three decades of cooperation with Senegal, FAO has assisted the implementation of at least 25 forestry projects covering such areas as planning, training, forest management, forest protection, public participation, community forestry, wildlife management and forest inventory.

However, the greatest transformation has been the decentralization of forestry administration. In 1996, building on a long tradition of peace, freedom, institutional stability and democracy, and seeking good governance and transparency in State affairs, the Government of Senegal undertook a thorough institutional reform with a view to establishing local communities as the main actors and real decision-making centres. The new administrative structure transferred authority

Distribution of authority among different levels of government

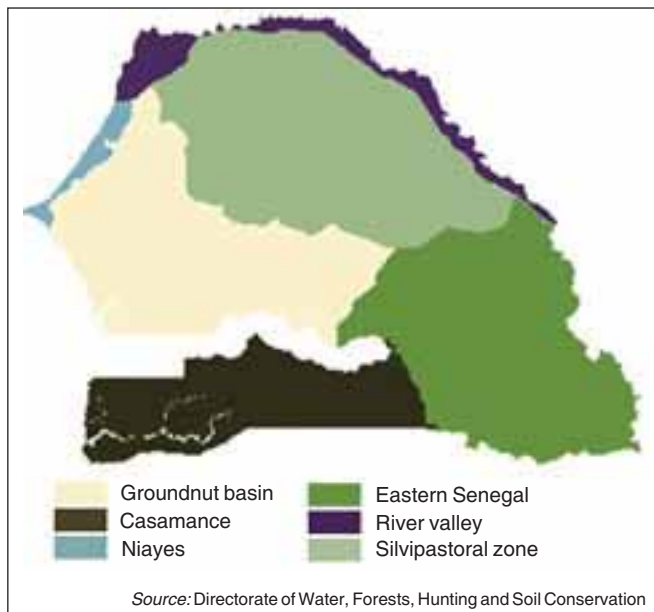
| Area of activity | Region | Municipality | Rural community |
|---|------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Management, protection and maintenance of forests and protected areas | * | | * |
| Grazing bans and other local measures for nature protection | * | * | * |
| Management of inland waters, except for watercourses with international or national status | * | | |
| Establishment or demarcation and management of woodlands, forests and protected areas | * | * | * |
| Creation of firebreaks and early burning, as part of bush fire control | * | | * |
| Wildlife management | * | | * |
| Distribution of regional wood extraction quotas among municipalities and rural communities | * | | |
| Issuing of hunting permits | * | | * |
| | (approval) | | (advisory role) |
| Formulation, implementation and monitoring of regional environmental action plans or schemes | * | | |
| Formulation and implementation of other environmental action plans | * | * | * |
| Formulation of specific regional plans for emergency intervention and risk management | * | | |
| Creation of volunteer brigades to protect the environment, especially to control poaching | * | | |
| Issuing of permits for forest clearing | * | | * |
| | (approval) | | (advisory role) |
| Issuing of preliminary tree felling authorization | | * | * |
| Levy of fines provided for in the Forest Code | | * | * |
| Waste management and control of unsanitary conditions, pollution and hazards in forestry operations | | * | * |
| Management of underground and surface water resources | | * | |
| Creation and management of artificial ponds and small dams | | | * |
| Creation, delimitation and demarcation of livestock trails | | | * |

to new regional and local government bodies, extending power to 11 regions, 110 municipalities, 43 districts and 320 rural communities. These decentralized bodies were given nine areas of responsibility: public land, health/population and social action, education, urbanization and habitat, youth/sport/leisure, land-use planning, culture, planning, natural resources and environment. This reform drastically changed approaches to forest administration and management.

DECENTRALIZATION AND FOREST MANAGEMENT

The 1996 reform led to an enlargement of the 1993 Forest Code to cover a broader domain. Major innovations in the new code of 1998 included:

- local communities' authority to manage forests outside the State's forest lands;
- the possibility for the State to entrust management of part of its forest lands to local communities under letters of agreement;



Ecogeographical zones of Senegal

- the liberty of local communities to establish contracts with physical persons and legal entities concerning the forest lands under their administration.

Within their administrative and/or geographical boundaries, the decision-making bodies, especially regional, municipal and rural community councils, each headed by a president elected through universal suffrage, received new powers in addition to those granted at the time of their creation (see Table).

The transfer of authority in natural resource and environmental management, as in all nine areas of responsibility listed above, is based on the general principle of freedom and proximity (devolving freedom in decision-making to elected local people or decentralized authorities well connected to their base) and the following specific principles:

- ***Demarcation of powers between the State and local communities.***

The State is the guarantor of rational natural resources and environmental management to ensure sustainable development. The State controls law enforcement and budget allocation and supervises local communities' exercise of authority. The State also guarantees the principle of solidarity

among local communities, encouraging them to coordinate activities of common interest, and has created a fund from the State budget for this purpose. Local communities are responsible for the design, planning and implementation of natural resource and environmental management activities of regional, municipal or rural community interest, and for ensuring protection of the resources. They are to encourage people's participation based on strict respect for the established principles, policy guidelines, technical options and forestry laws and regulations. They are responsible for implementing plans and guidelines based on the specific features of each ecogeographical zone (see Figure).

- ***Solidarity and sharing in the exercise of authority, and prohibition of the transfer of control.*** No local community may establish or exercise control (administrative, financial or technical) over another local community. Groups of two or more communities may undertake cooperative activities for the promotion and coordination of development activities in specific spheres. Local

communities may individually or collectively undertake programmes of common interest with the State. They may undertake cooperative activities leading to agreements with local communities in other countries or international public or private development bodies.

- ***Concomitant transfer of funds.*** Any transfer of authority to a community must be accompanied by a concomitant transfer from the State of the financial means for proper exercise of such authority. The State has established grant funds to this end.

Effectiveness of decentralized powers

An evaluation of decentralization in natural resource and environmental management (Wade, 2004) revealed that a number of factors limit local communities in assuming their role satisfactorily:

- lack of precision in the formulation of certain measures, resulting in a variety of interpretations of elected officials' prerogatives with regard to land tenure and forestry, for example;
- little commitment of elected officials to take effective responsibility for forest resource management;
- insufficient coordination, harmonization and integration within communities of the interventions of the various actors in the sector, and especially of forest management support structures;
- lack of communication among actors in rural development, especially field staff, for different sectors of activity;
- insufficient expertise within local communities, despite arrangements to make technical assistance available to them through decentralized services;
- insufficient financial and logistical resources for natural resource management by local communities, since grant funds are not always

Senegal's recently approved National Forest Policy revises the earlier Forest Action Plan to address poverty reduction as well as environmental sustainability (villager on his way to the local market with medicinal plants from the forest)



FAO/CIH/001/99/R_FAI/DT/11

easily accessible, and the communities do not give a high priority to natural resources and the environment when they allocate funds among the nine spheres for which they are responsible;

- insufficient awareness among local communities of the many opportunities related to forest use;
- widely recognized shortcomings in the capacities of local officials (most of whom are elected) despite many capacity building efforts;
- delays in bringing certain documents into line with the decentralization law – for example, the 1996 decree fixing fees for forest extraction does not allot a share of the proceeds to local communities.

THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL FOREST SERVICE IN STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES

The institutional arrangement for decentralization anticipated capacity-building for elected officials and harmonization of the various local and regional plans (e.g. the Regional Integrated Development Programme, the Regional Land Use Plan, the Municipal Investment Programme and the Local Development Plan). National economic plans support this set-up, channelling resources through regional development agencies created in each of the country's eleven administrative regions. These agencies have a crucial role in coordinating and mobilizing local institutions and resources and are strong examples of effective decentralization in action.

Within this framework, the national

forest service has an advisory and supporting role for local communities, focusing particularly on:

- facilitation of direct financial support to local communities for the formulation and execution of development plans for the forests on their lands;
- building the technical, organizational and financial capacity of elected officials so that they will be better equipped to carry out natural resource management activities;
- training of elected officials to familiarize them with the laws, regulations and processes governing decentralized natural resource and environmental planning and management;
- support for the establishment of local information systems;
- ensuring that part of all taxes derived from forest exploitation is transferred to local governments as the law dictates;
- reform of the taxation system (currently under examination) to ensure rational allocation of forest taxes and fees;
- fostering joint management agreements between the national forest service and local communities;
- increasing women's involvement in

natural resource management activities, given their major contribution to economic processes and their strong influence on the environment;

- formulation and implementation of the priority projects and programmes contained in the recently approved National Forest Policy, the successor to the Forest Action Plan.

NEW NATIONAL FOREST POLICY

It is vital that activities initiated by projects and programmes can be continued by the beneficiary populations on their own. Unfortunately this is not always the case. With this concern in mind, Senegal decided to revise its Forest Action Plan, which had allowed sizable investments in the forest sector, to bring it into line with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, the UNCED agreements and the new decentralized institutional framework. The new National Forest Policy links the two themes of decentralization and poverty reduction.

The policy was elaborated through a bottom-up planning process involving all stakeholders and institutions dealing with natural resources management. It includes a diagnosis of problems, defines



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Studies supported by the National Forest Programme Facility have included an analysis of the contribution of forest products in FAO's Special Programme for Food Security – which included small-scale projects on apiculture, for example

a long-term vision, gives principles for operations, defines strategies and orientations and lists priority projects and programmes.

In the revision of the Forest Action Plan, the national forest service received essential support from the National Forest Programme Facility. The Facility signed a letter of agreement with the Directorate of Water, Forests, Hunting and Soil Conservation in April 2003 to support and consolidate Senegal's National Forest Policy. In its first phase, this partnership assisted the formulation of five regional forest action plans and provided funding for national workshops on the launching and implementation of the new forest policy and for studies on Senegalese forestry. These studies included, *inter alia*, an analysis of public spending in the forest sector; the impact of the Forest Action Plan on wildlife; the efficacy of decentralization and transfer of powers in natural resource management; and the contribution of forest products in the Special Programme for Food Security, FAO's flagship initiative for halving the number of hungry people in the world by 2015.

In Phase II (2004–2007), the Facility proposed that civil society organizations should have a more decisive role in the national forest programme. For trans-

parency in project selection, a national committee made up of representatives of State structures, local communities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) selected the best projects from those received in response to a call for proposals. The main themes of the ongoing activities are:

- studies of support mechanisms for local communities and encouragement of stakeholders' participation in natural resource management;
- training of local elected officials, grassroots community organizations and women's groups in natural resource planning and management;
- studies of wood and non-wood forest product flows;
- boosting of capacities in project design and formulation;
- awareness raising to increase protection of natural forest and wooded lands against various causes of degradation;
- definition of an urban and peri-urban forest management strategy.

Activities have included numerous training workshops targeting a great variety of stakeholders, from local elected officials, business and religious leaders, representatives of community organizations and NGOs to policy-makers and government officers.

SENEGAL'S NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMME: ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTLOOK

First under the Forest Development Master Plan, then the Forest Action Plan and now the National Forest Policy, Senegal with the support of international cooperation has devised and implemented major programmes and projects to combat desertification, curb the negative trend of biodiversity loss and soil degradation, and generally improve people's livelihoods.

The national forest service, along with the other services of the Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection, has undertaken about 30 natural resource management projects and programmes in the six ecogeographical zones, in partnership with local people and communities, which have had a positive impact on the environment, natural resources, people and institutions. Examples of successful projects that are meeting the expectations of development partners and the needs of local populations include:

- the Coastal Land Conservation Project in the Niayes zone (begun in 1979 and continuing after many phases, with support from Japan) which is providing on-site protection of horticultural lowlands or depressions (pans) and fixation of coastal and inland dunes;

- the Diourbel Agroforestry Project I and II in the Groundnut Basin zone (1996–2006, with another phase expected), which focuses on prevention of soil degradation, improvement in rural people's incomes and living conditions;
- a project supported by Germany (1995–2010) for rehabilitation and reforestation of overgrazed lands in the Ferlo zone;
- the Project for Integrated Ecosystem Management in Senegal (Projet de gestion intégrée des écosystèmes, PGIES) in the eastern silvipastoral zone (since 2002): removal of constraints on sustainable development, rehabilitation of ecosystem integrity and function, joint management of protected areas, participatory monitoring and evaluation (*ed. note*: see article by M. Ba Diao in *Unasylva* 223, 2006);
- the Sustainable and Participatory Energy Project (Programme de gestion durable et participative des énergies traditionnelles et de substitution, PROGEDE) in the eastern silvipastoral and southern zones (1998–2007), which concerns regulation of fuelwood collection, inventory and management of fuelwood supplies, sustainable forest management, rational management of cooking energy demand.

Furthermore, with the assistance of the Government of the Netherlands, the Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection is testing a new planning tool, the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. Under this framework planning is carried out every three years and includes a clear statement of objectives; the expected results; the definition of programmes, projects and activities; the identification of the institutions or organizations responsible for undertaking the activities; the time frame; and performance indicators to monitor progress. This tool, after testing, evaluation of its advantages and disadvantages, and inclusion of any necessary improvements, is expected to

provide better directing of resources to essential activities.

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Senegal's national forest programme is based on a well-designed planning process, the support of government officials, the funding and assistance of many countries and international agencies such as FAO, and the collaboration of all actors or stakeholders, including populations and local communities, NGOs, forest industries, professional organizations, private forest investors and others. Although the total numbers of projects and programmes have declined through time, the State has put a strong emphasis on environmental protection and natural resources conservation and management.

With the decentralization reform, the Government of Senegal took decisive steps to give local governments (rural communities, mayors, regional councils) powers to take matters of natural resources conservation and environmental protection into their own hands by devolving to them the power to make decisions and take action. Senegal's national forest programme is building capacities to enable them to carry out their role effectively, while linking decentralization to poverty reduction and socio-economic development. ♦



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Linking national forest programmes and poverty reduction strategies

S. Geller and R. McConnell

An FAO study in seven African countries suggests ways to enhance financial, institutional and policy support for forest-based poverty alleviation.



*National forest programmes could help address the underfunding of the sector by building better linkages to poverty reduction strategies (Sudanese villagers collecting *Acacia nilotica* pods for a local planting scheme)*

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The cross-sectoral and participatory nature of national forest programmes (NFPs) makes them ideal mechanisms for gathering and sharing information from a wide range of sources on country issues, priorities and initiatives both within and outside forestry. As such, they could be instrumental in addressing the marginalization and underfunding of the sector by building linkages to wider national agendas, including poverty reduction strategies (PRSs). Yet the ties are often weak or non-existent.

This article examines the reasons for the weakness or absence of linkages and proposes some ways to strengthen the relationship between the two processes, based on preliminary findings of

an FAO study in seven African countries: Namibia, the Niger, Nigeria, the Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. Starting in 2005, interviews with representatives from government, the private sector and organizations from civil society identified factors that enhance the presence and influence of forestry in wider planning processes as well as best practices, challenges and opportunities for establishing effective linkages.

MAINSTREAMING Forestry in poverty reduction strategies

The extent to which forestry objectives and targets are included in national strat-

egies to reduce poverty varies considerably, based on the country's particular circumstances.

Political context. The framework in which the PRS process unfolds is largely shaped by the stability of government and its institutions and the extent of high-level political commitment to implement positive change.

Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement, for example, is likely to result in emphasis on noticeably different aspects of forestry in the north (support to livelihoods) and the south (engine for growth). Civil strife in Uganda and Tanzania's affinity for collective approaches are factors that have influenced the development and implementation of their respective PRSs.

Complementary frameworks. In some countries, other national strategies are more relevant to advancing forestry objectives than those that exclusively aim to reduce poverty. In Namibia, for example, the Public Sector Investment Plan includes more forestry issues than its National Poverty Reduction Action Programme. In such cases, stakeholders need to extend their involvement in other processes if national forest programmes are to address issues in the context of broader country priorities.

However, if PRSs also target economic growth in addition to poverty reduction, the forestry sector can usually advance its priorities through this particular process.

Heightened awareness. In the seven countries studied, revised PRSs were found to be more likely than the initial documents to highlight forestry's contributions to the economy, the problems the sector faces, its potential to alleviate poverty, and external factors that influence sustainable forest management. In the second version of Uganda's PRS, for example, forestry is listed as an urgent short-term priority for funding.

Environmental mainstreaming. The more that forest authorities engage in efforts to integrate environmental concerns throughout poverty reduction strategies wherever relevant, the more attention is given to forestry in the final document in terms of identifying priorities, objectives, targets and action plans. Namibia, the Niger, Tanzania and Uganda are well advanced in this regard.

Subnational profiling. The importance of trees and forests to livelihoods is not uniform across any country because of variations in resources, tree cover and population density. Although national PRS processes gather local or regional information on poverty, such profiles often do not mention the contributions of forestry even when villages accord high importance to the sector. Moreover, when subnational authorities do pinpoint forestry as a priority for action, ministries of finance frequently do not accommodate their requests for support.

Long-term horizon. In all seven countries, forestry was seen as a long-term and high-risk investment in comparison with other productive sectors such as agriculture. Considering that benefits of sustainable forest management often take years to accrue and that political mandates are much shorter, the sector wields little bargaining power.

Lack of data on forestry's contribu-

tions to poverty reduction – for example, data on its importance to farmers in maintaining soil fertility to grow crops, to pastoralists in providing browse for animals or to households for energy; or information on the cost of substitutes for woodfuel when forests are depleted or degraded – is another major constraint that prevents it from holding a central place in PRSs.

Monitoring. Although poverty goes beyond economic growth, most PRSs still deal with issues on a sector-by-sector basis – an approach that makes it difficult to take into account the social, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions of forestry. As PRS monitoring systems become more complex and interlinked, indicators could measure the impact of the sector on poverty as well as demonstrate its influence in other areas such as agriculture and water. Such indicators could include the extent to which windbreaks increase agricultural productivity, the extent to which forests reduce levels of downstream sediment in water supply reservoirs and the extent to which forested catchments reduce requirements for water treatment.

Participation. Despite the challenges and costs of implementing participatory processes to reflect the needs and priorities of its citizens accurately, countries recognize the importance of consulting widely during the drafting of PRSs and

The second version of Uganda's poverty reduction strategy lists forestry as an urgent short-term priority for funding (house construction with Ficus wood)



FAO/CIH00374R_PAN/DTM

their subsequent revision. What is not always obvious, however, is the need for forestry interests to be well represented during discussions, including those on priority areas for action.

Poverty reduction in national forest programmes

In each of the seven countries that participated in the study, the national forest programmes noted the need to be coherent with broader frameworks, including PRS processes. Factors that were found to influence the content of NFPs include:

Livelihood linkages. The importance of forests and trees for livelihoods is expressed in NFPs more in terms of the goods and services they provide for subsistence than in terms of income creation. The focus is generally on activities that are simple, labour intensive and household based.

Sector analysis. A national forest sector review provides the basis for establishing NFP objectives, priorities, activities and targets, but also for linking into PRSs. Although the countries carried out sector analysis to a varying extent, all identified poverty and population growth as root causes of deforestation; recognized the multiple role of forests; fostered the development of guiding principles on community participation in the management of resources; and showed how programmes would create jobs, deliver a skilled civil service, redistribute income to communities, establish industry, generate income and contribute to foreign exchange earnings.

Cross-cutting dynamics. Although many of the NFPs that were examined consider agriculture, health, energy and rural development as key sectors, few address issues that originate outside forestry yet affect its viability. In addition, the NFPs generally were not developed in the context of wider programmes such

as those related to institutional reform, nor did they sufficiently take into account the sometimes conflicting objectives of development and conservation.

Prioritization. Most of the NFPs have yet to deliver a strategy in which social issues are as important as productive issues or where the tradeoffs that must be made to reduce poverty are assessed. Consequently, the sector's contributions to poverty reduction are not well measured and areas for investment are not adequately prioritized.

Public sector funding

Linking NFPs to PRSs and therefore to the annual and medium-term budgeting frameworks should improve the chances of forestry receiving additional government funding. So far, these links are tenuous.

Public expenditure management.

Although fiscal management is improving, links between PRSs and budget processes are still weak. In addition, public accountability and expenditure management systems have been neglected so that not only can wide disparities occur between allocations and disbursements, but non-PRS activities can and do get funded at the expense of PRS priorities. In response to public pressure on government to show results and provide value for money, Nigeria is testing a system that monitors budget line items in key sectors that aim to reduce poverty as part of efforts to demonstrate transparent and effective use of public funds.

Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF).

Although some countries have made progress in implementing the MTEF in planning and budgeting, all continue to experience difficulties in aligning their PRSs, other strategic plans and forestry budgets with the MTEF. During the annual preparation of budgets, ministries of finance and line ministries still discuss performance

NFP coordination in Uganda

The Forest Sector Coordination Committee is a high-level forum that was established to direct the implementation of the national forest programme and the Forestry Sector Umbrella Programme in particular. It is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment, and membership consists of senior officials from seven ministries (agriculture, tourism, local government, public service, finance, energy and education), the private sector and civil society. Through its NFP Steering Group and six technical working groups, the committee broadened participation in the NFP beyond forestry circles, providing a venue for a number of sectors to exchange information and address issues of common concern, including those related to poverty. Because of its broad scope and influence, the committee was instrumental in integrating forestry into Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan.

in terms of money spent or absorptive capacity rather than in terms of contributions to poverty reduction. For these and other reasons, the scope for securing increased funding for NFPs remains largely unpredictable.

Resource allocation to forestry. Many activities, although listed as priorities in NFPs, are not allocated resources. In some cases, costs are estimated for projects that could be financed, at least in part, from public and private sources. However, this ad hoc approach seldom considers how to link NFP implementation with initiatives in other sectors to improve cost effectiveness and increase the impact of interventions on poverty reduction. If each sector gathered information on the unit costs of achieving outcomes and targets, including those related to PRS implementation, and submitted this information as part of ongoing public expenditure reviews, line

ministries would then be able to draw on this information to streamline costs of administering programmes while maximizing their effect.

IMPROVING LINKAGES: CONSTRAINTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND SUGGESTIONS

Coordination and participation

The study found that good NFP coordination improves the interface with agencies responsible for PRSs and can often convince partners, including ministries of finance and donors, to support NFP priorities. When forestry experts are at the table when decisions are made that affect the sector, they can influence outcomes, especially on matters pertaining to monitoring and evaluating the impacts of programmes on poverty reduction. Stakeholder engagement is fundamental to instilling a sense of ownership in the NFP and PRS processes and is most successful when the full range of interested parties is involved.

Countries that have established NFP coordination units (e.g. Tanzania and Uganda – see Box opposite) have more effectively secured the involvement of authorities who oversee the formulation and implementation of PRSs. These units are effective in carrying out tasks

because members of the team have different backgrounds and skill sets: forest economics, social sciences, poverty analysis, sector planning, communications, statistics and law are all important.

NFP coordination units should reach beyond the forest sector to expose more stakeholders to the concept of sustainable forest management and cross-cutting issues, help other sectors to understand how their activities affect and are affected by forestry, and stimulate ideas on how to improve collaboration to achieve common goals, including poverty reduction.

National accounts and economics

In national accounts, economic activities are classified on the basis of the International Standards of Industrial Classification, and forestry's contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) is aggregated as part of the agriculture sector. In each of the seven countries, forestry authorities are trying to face up to the challenges of calculating the full economic value of the sector. In addition to the lack of reliable information, weak capacity to analyse statistics prevents them from building a solid case to capture the attention of decision-makers. Nigeria's attempt to assess the social and economic conse-



Namibia's recently established environmental economics unit is developing stronger evidence to highlight the place of forestry in the next generation of PRSs (community forestry nursery)

quences of unsustainable forestry may prove useful (see Box below), and Namibia's recently established environmental economics unit is developing stronger evidence to enlighten the next generation of PRSs.

Although research has increasingly been able to quantify the value of forests and suggest ways to analyse their full contribution to GDP, more information is needed on the value of the environmental services that these resources provide, including water quality and supply, soil retention and fertility, carbon storage and conservation of biodiversity. Because green accounting (i.e. assigning a value to these services) captures more fully the importance of forestry to the economy and to poverty reduction, the forest sector should work with national planning commissions, statistical authorities and energy commissions, among others, to use new accounting methodologies in surveys, assess the impacts of policy options and measure both the qualitative and quantitative contributions of forestry to poverty alleviation.

Research on the consequences of unsustainable forest management in Nigeria

Research conducted by the African Institute for Applied Economics (AIAE) estimated that economic losses as a result of deforestation and forest degradation in the past five decades was at least 120 billion naira (US\$0.8 billion) per annum, or 1.7 percent of GDP in 2003 – a figure roughly the size of the combined federal budget for health and education in 2004. The study revealed that in parts of the country the real prices of fuelwood have doubled over the past 20 years as a result of increased collection and transportation costs. It further predicted that if Nigeria lost its remaining forest resources and the population that now depends on fuelwood for cooking were forced to switch to kerosene, the annual cost would be 650 to 980 billion naira (US\$4.8 to 7.3 billion). This amount, in addition to values forgone for timber and non-wood forest products, is equivalent to 6 to 9.3 percent of current GDP (estimated at US\$78 billion in 2005).

Source: AIAE. 2005. *Unlocking the potentials of agriculture and forestry for growth and poverty reduction*. Enugu, Nigeria. Available at: www.aiae-nigeria.org/Publications/Policybrief1.pdf

Monitoring and evaluation

If monitoring and evaluation of the PRS and NFP processes are linked and comprehensive in design, they can facilitate collaboration between forestry authorities and lead PRS agencies. If systems are not complementary and there is no clear indication of who is responsible for various aspects of their respective implementation, it is difficult to identify entry points for interventions and to assess progress accurately.

Poverty reduction strategies. In countries where PRS processes have been going on for some time, the approach to monitoring and evaluating their implementation tends to link qualitative and quantitative data in the hope of raising new questions, scrutinizing policy assumptions and exploring issues and trends in greater depth.

Information systems draw from a variety of sources to track the extent to which poor people derive benefits from public expenditures and from government policies and programmes designed to alleviate poverty. Each of the seven countries has significant gaps and shortcomings in the quantity, quality and availability of information to monitor PRSs, including a lack of adequate poverty baseline data, poor mapping of vulnerabilities, limited market information and restricted access to remote areas. The data collected tend to be localized, context specific and difficult to aggregate so that they are not easily integrated into government decision-making.

Indicators for monitoring and evaluating PRSs have become important tools for assessing the effectiveness of forestry interventions in reducing poverty. Uganda and Tanzania have each formulated a forestry indicator to assess PRS performance (see Box)

National forest programmes. Despite plans to establish databases and monitor forest activities using information generated at various levels and from other

sectors, forest-related data, when collected, are often kept in different systems and are not always accessible. The paucity of facts and figures makes it difficult to demonstrate the importance of forestry to poverty alleviation.

Because monitoring and evaluation systems are only now being developed in earnest for NFPs, forest authorities might find it useful to replicate or tailor proven practices and instruments found elsewhere rather than design new ones. In addition, they should incorporate data collection and analysis on poverty into their regular work, using sources of information such as forest sector reviews, household surveys, forest valuation studies and participatory poverty assessments in which poor people express their concerns. Monitoring units

should be established within parent ministries to monitor NFP performance.

As systems for monitoring poverty develop, forestry authorities should work closely with those involved in PRSs to propose criteria that are relevant to specific PRS goals. They should also clearly define indicators, outline the scope and approach for interpreting them, set targets, establish baselines, identify data sets and determine the frequency of data collection as well as the responsible institutions.

Decentralized forestry services

Although efforts are being made in all seven countries to engage local governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in NFP and PRS formulation, resource constraints make it nearly

Developing forestry-based poverty indicators in the United Republic of Tanzania

Tanzania's poverty monitoring strategy tracks the extent to which poor people derive benefits from policies and programmes to alleviate poverty. It draws on administrative data from federal ministries and local governments, national surveys, research and participatory poverty assessments that capture the views of poor people. After extensive consultations, the Poverty Eradication Division of the Ministry of Planning, Economy and Empowerment developed 49 indicators to shed light on the links between poverty and the environment, of which 15 were proposed for the National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction. The indicator specific to forestry concerns the percentage of households that use other sources of energy than woodfuel (including charcoal) for cooking. However, adding indicators on the collection and use of fuelwood would strengthen the linkages between forestry and poverty reduction, as would questions in household surveys that consider other activities for which fuelwood is used – for example curing tobacco, brick-making and brewing.

Tanzania's indicators for monitoring the performance of its poverty reduction strategy include one specific to forestry: the percentage of households that use other sources of energy than woodfuel for cooking



PHOTO: S45/91/LEH/UNEP

impossible to secure wide ownership of the processes. Given the lack of attention that public authorities in these countries generally accord to issues related to the environment and natural resources, lower tiers of government are finding it difficult to manage the increasing portion of forest estate for which they are being given responsibility.

Just as forestry advocates lobby to make their voices heard in the nation's capital, they also need to push for inclusion in decision-making processes in local government administrations. Their participation is a prerequisite if the state or local equivalent of an NFP is to make forestry interventions work more effectively for poor people. In this regard, the experiences of other sectors can be instructive. For example, in Tanzania the health sector provides lessons on how to decentralize budgets effectively and target spending on activities that reduce poverty.

In designing participatory subnational NFP processes, still at modest levels in many countries, governments and their partners should consider ways to:

- address weak human resource and institutional capacity;
- secure buy-in from forestry officials to reflect NFP priorities in lower tiers of government;
- mainstream forestry into regional, provincial, state and district development plans;
- manage change and train front line staff to adopt new and better ways of managing forests;
- revise benefit sharing and expenditure mechanisms so that communities and each level of government have adequate revenues to discharge their responsibilities.

Forest enterprise development

Viable forest enterprises depend not only on market demand but also on the sustainable management of resources. Despite emphasis on private-sector investment and enterprise development

Both NFPs and PRSs emphasize enterprise development, where interventions are needed e.g. to improve marketing capabilities and linkages between small suppliers and large buyers (resin of Acacia senegal in the Sudan)



FAO/CIH/00157R-FAD/11/11

in both NFPs and PRSs, they face many constraints including lack of coherent policies; high costs of legal and regulatory compliance; inadequate marketing capabilities; weak linkages between small suppliers and large buyers; limited access to credit, finance, capital and technology; and shortage of business and technical skills.

Interventions intended to spur economic growth within the framework of poverty reduction strategies can favour the establishment or expansion of forest enterprises by, for example, increasing demand for existing products, creating new markets, improving market functioning, and enhancing efficiencies and waste management through technological innovation. Governments could increase the potential of the private sector to invest in business ventures and job creation by reviewing relevant legislation and strengthening institutional capacity to address issues affecting the forestry sector in the fields of environment, labour, trade, property rights and taxation.

People's participation in forest management and in national policy processes

When implemented properly with clear ownership, user rights and adequate policy and institutional support, participatory forest management can provide incentives for forest management and a pathway to improved livelihoods. All seven countries practice some form

of participatory forest management to varying degrees. With few exceptions, however, the approach is experimental, limited to specific areas and dependent on ad hoc external support. In addition, the legal basis for benefit sharing is often not in place so that communities are unable to implement the agreements they negotiate with governments.

Assessment of the social, economic, ecological and institutional conditions where participatory forest management enhances forest quality, livelihoods and governance would provide solid arguments for expanding participatory forest management and according it priority in NFPs and in budget allocation.

The participation of civil society in NFP processes is similar to that in PRSs. Rural groups are sometimes less satisfied with government efforts to involve them than are their colleagues working in capital cities. In general, civil society actors are concerned that the shift in donor aid from projects to central budget support has increased their reliance on government funding, which they fear could compromise their objectivity. They also maintain that this new approach all but eliminates project support to communities where measures to reduce poverty are needed the most.

In two countries, NGOs led the effort to mainstream forestry into the PRS. The Government of Namibia contracted an environmental NGO to arrange consultations and produce a draft strategy, and



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Participatory forest management can provide incentives for forest management and a pathway to improved livelihoods (community forest meeting in Namibia)

the Government of Tanzania commissioned a consortium of NGOs to analyse its PRS, assess the training needs of key organizations and design as well as deliver training on poverty-environment linkages.

Several organizations are well placed to share experiences and information, provide advocacy and facilitate access to networks. To the extent that resources are available for joint ventures, stronger partnerships would build NGO capacity to address issues of common concern, including illegal logging, participatory forest management, decentralization and benefit sharing. Sharing lessons on how forestry contributes to poverty reduction with civil society groups in other countries would also enhance regional and international networking.

Awareness raising and communications

Communications and marketing are possibly the most underfunded components of the forest policy process. Better use of the mass media, brochures, fact sheets, workshops and documentaries could raise the profile of forestry and awareness of its importance in reducing poverty. Similarly, briefings to members of parliament could inform them about the sector's contributions to national development.

Many foresters, including those involved in formulating, implementing and monitoring NFPs, are unaccustomed to working across sectors or with central planning processes. Thus, they are not

as knowledgeable of PRSs as they could be and are often absent when outside interests take decisions that affect forest resources and the people who depend on them. By the same token, when agencies responsible for PRSs are unaware of NFP priorities, they cannot take them into account when developing programmes, allocating budgets and designing indicators to measure the impact of pro-poor interventions.

Limited access to documents and electronic media continues to hinder the effective engagement of stakeholders and to prevent a better understanding of issues. However, a few countries have produced and distributed user-friendly versions of their NFPs and PRSs and have shown in this way how communications can be used to make the link between forestry and poverty alleviation. National forest policies and legislation should be explained in straightforward language, especially aspects related to participatory forest management.

CONCLUSIONS

NFPs would be more relevant as instruments for achieving national poverty reduction goals if they would be updated to: prioritize activities and areas for investment that are pro-poor; focus on poverty reduction and livelihood improvements as core objectives; promote collaboration among forestry authorities and those leading the PRS process; align forestry more closely with core government reforms; embed forestry

questions in routine data collection via such means as household surveys; comprehensively address cross-sectoral policy issues; elaborate approaches to capture emerging markets for environmental services; and develop coherent monitoring and evaluation systems linked to PRS monitoring.

Although the FAO study of linkages between NFPs and PRSs is ongoing, the following trends are emerging.

- The adoption of poverty reduction as a national goal is sharpening the focus on cross-cutting issues, and governments are instituting cross-sectoral approaches to planning and resource allocation.
- Efforts to assess and report on poverty are increasingly involving stakeholders, but governments often find participatory processes time consuming and costly. Some also lack the capacity or political will to carry them out.
- Decision-makers are likely to continue to underestimate the importance of forestry to social and economic development as long as the sector fails to quantify the full extent of its contributions.
- The shift in donor funding from sector-specific projects to support of central processes is weakening forestry capacity and hindering efforts to decentralize services to districts and communities where interventions have the greatest potential to alleviate poverty.
- Marketing forestry on the basis of its capacity to meet key objectives of other sectors could broaden understanding of the benefits and open up opportunities for collaboration.

It is hoped that the results of the full study will assist countries to enhance the presence and influence of forestry in wider planning instruments – including poverty reduction strategies – and strengthen financial, institutional and policy support for forest-based poverty alleviation. ♦

PROFOR – an overview

L. Ivers

The Program on Forests (PROFOR) is a multidonor partnership for enhancing forests' contribution to poverty reduction, sustainable development and protection of environmental services through the implementation of national forest programmes (NFPs) or equivalent forest policy processes. PROFOR seeks to encourage the transition to a more socially and environmentally sustainable forest sector supported by sound policies and institutions that take a holistic approach to forest conservation and management.

Initially established in 1997 at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), PROFOR relocated to the World Bank in 2002. PROFOR covers projects in four thematic areas:

- **A livelihoods approach to poverty reduction** – increasing forests' contribution to the livelihoods of the rural poor through employment and income creation;
- **Forest governance** – improving decision-making processes as well as regulatory and institutional frameworks, e.g. for better enforcement of regulations, improved incentives and enhanced transparency and accountability;
- **Innovative approaches to financing sustainable forest management** – identifying market incentives that promote sustainable forest management, reforming forest revenue collection systems and developing markets and compensation mechanisms for forest environmental services;
- **Cross-sectoral cooperation for positive forest outcomes** – improving understanding of how macro policy reforms and actions in other sectors affect forests, and devising ways to minimize

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or offset potential negative impacts and increase positive outcomes.

PROFOR gives special emphasis to projects with high potential for providing lessons and knowledge gains that are transferable and relevant to a wide range of situations.

Since 2002, the PROFOR portfolio has included 35 diverse activities, implemented at the global, regional and national levels and frequently implemented in partnership with other national and international organizations. Some examples:

Poverty-Forests Toolkit. The Poverty-Forests Toolkit helps identify and document how forests contribute to livelihoods in order to make a stronger case for forests within national development agendas and integrate national forest programmes in poverty reduction strategies. Developed in partnership with the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and Winrock International, the toolkit builds on knowledge generated through case studies carried out in Guinea, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Laos, Mexico, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania to assess how locally and sustainably managed forests enhance rural livelihoods and conserve biodiversity.

Forest Investment Fora. PROFOR has spearheaded a series of fora designed to encourage international financing agencies, private-sector investors, industry and civil society to identify opportunities for investments in environmentally and socially sustainable forestry. A global forum in 2002 launched this series, resulting in demand for subsequent regional and national fora. Most recently, a forum was held for eastern and southern Africa in June 2006. It focused on land tenure reform in support of community forest ownership, measures to increase transparency in forest resource allocation, market mechanisms such as forest certification and proof of legality, and payments for environmental services. The Forum also considered means to encourage company-community partnerships and small- and medium-scale forest-based enterprises.

Support to national forest sector reform in China. China's New Countryside Strategy calls for increased assistance to rural areas and policies more favourable for the rural poor. To enable the forest sector to contribute to this strategy, China is committed to reforming collective forest areas. Hence it must reform the institutional setting and policy framework to improve tenure rights for rural farmers and enhance forest-based livelihoods. PROFOR is helping this process by supporting analyses of the forest tenure system and policies needed to implement tenure reform – through surveys of existing forest land tenure and management practices at the household and village levels, comparative analysis of forest business models to determine best practices for rural community welfare, and identification of policy and regulatory reforms needed to improve forest producers' performance.

Land administration in Brazil. With a view to supporting improved land management in the Brazilian Amazon, PROFOR is supporting an assessment of how land rights are signalled, adjudicated, documented and enforced along the forest-agriculture frontier. The analysis will look at the complex interactions of different formal and informal stakeholders through case studies in four states of Brazil. The findings will also be of relevance for land management issues in neighbouring Amazon Basin countries.

Easing institutional change. PROFOR has helped to inform the institutional reform process in the Russian Federation by supporting dialogue on key issues such as concession systems and fire management. In Honduras, PROFOR has promoted dialogue with countries that have undertaken land tenure, institutional, industrial and market reforms to assist policy-makers facing challenging choices.

For more information...

PROFOR is funded by the European Commission, Finland, Japan, Switzerland the United Kingdom. Germany is an in-kind contributor. For more information: www.profor.info



FAO FORESTRY

Argentina to host XIII World Forestry Congress in 2009

Preparations are under way for the XIII World Forestry Congress, to be held from 18 to 25 October 2009 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It is expected that this event will attract about 4 000 participants from more than 100 countries. The World Forestry Congress is held every six years and is co-sponsored by FAO and the host country.

The Congress will include one week of presentations, discussions, round tables, parallel events and exhibits. In the two weeks following the Congress, study tours will be offered to diverse types of forests throughout the country. Institutions from various sectors in Argentina will be involved in organizing the Congress, with the advice and assistance of FAO.

The theme for the XIII World Forestry Congress will be "Forests in development: a vital balance". This theme guarantees opportunities to analyse social, environmental and economic aspects of natural resources in a local, regional and global context. The importance of the sustainable management of all types of forests will be emphasized, as well as the contribution of forest resources to the sustainability of the planet. The congress will provide an opportunity to learn about the diverse ecosystems of the different regions of the world, as well as the diverse perspectives of people and organizations who share an interest in forests, including academics, forest producers, environmentalists, rural and indigenous people, forest managers, technical experts and policy-makers. The Congress will offer a truly global view of the future of the world's forests.

Argentina has about 33 million hectares of native forests and an additional 1.1 million hectares of planted forests, covering a broad spectrum of ecosystems, including humid, subtropical, temperate, semi-arid and arid forest types. Thanks to this range and to an extensive network of protected areas, the study tours to different parts of the country will offer incomparable opportunities for

combining the on-site study of diverse forests with the enjoyment of beautiful forest scenery.

Biennial meeting of the North American Forest Commission

The impact of climate change on North American forests was a key focus of discussions at the twenty-third session of the North American Forest Commission, held in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada from 23 to 24 October 2006. With climate variability likely to increase in the future, representatives of the commission's three member countries – Canada, Mexico and the United States – agreed that more intense precipitation events, droughts and heat waves will represent an increasing threat to forest health. The outbreak of mountain pine beetle that is devastating forests in British Columbia may be a harbinger of increasingly severe outbreaks of forest pests, for example. The delegates agreed that adaptation to climate change is one of the great challenges of the future and recommended that all FAO Regional Forestry Commissions consider addressing the issue in 2008.

At its previous session in 2004, the Commission had agreed to undertake, for the first time in its 47 years, an evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, to assist in identifying means of enhancing its effectiveness. The evaluation report, presented at the meeting, noted that the commission, while not influencing forest policy extensively in the three countries, has been successful as a technical forum and that its working groups have made significant contributions to their subject areas (fire management; atmospheric change and forests; forest products; forest insects and diseases; silviculture; inventory, monitoring and assessment; forest genetic resources; and watershed management). The Commission has been a catalyst for sharing resources to prevent and manage forest fires and pest and disease outbreaks that cross national borders. These initiatives serve as a model for other regions.

Responsible public procurement of forest products

National and local governments are major consumers of wood and paper products. Several governments have developed, or are in the process of developing, purchasing policies to ensure that forest products come from legal and sustainably managed sources.

To encourage the sharing of experience among countries that already have policies in place and those that do not, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission held a policy forum in Geneva, Switzerland on 5 October 2006.

The forum "Public procurement policies for wood and paper products and their impacts on sustainable forest management and timber markets" brought together national and local government authorities with industry and trade associations, exporting and





importing enterprises and non-governmental environmental organizations to discuss ways to encourage public procurement policies and to harmonize them among countries so as to not create market barriers.

The findings of a recently completed FAO study, "Public Procurement Policies for Forest Products and their Impacts", served as the discussion paper for the meeting. The results of a study by the Team of Specialists on Forest Products Markets and Marketing, "Market Effects of Public Procurement Policies for Wood and Paper Products in the UNECE Region", were also presented. Representatives of a number of European countries and the United States described their policies, and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) presented the viewpoint of tropical exporting countries.

The forum focused on the following questions:

- Are existing public procurement policies effective in achieving their goals?
- What are the impacts of public procurement, including their implications for markets for wood and paper products?
- How can public procurement policies avoid creating market barriers?
- How can implementation procedures be improved, including instruments for verification of legality and sustainability as well as alternative forms of evidence?
- Are harmonized approaches in public procurement policies necessary or possible?

The forum supported the importance of procurement policies. Although their positive effects on sustainable forest management are difficult to prove, they discourage illegal extraction and trade. Public procurement can provide a role model for the private sector.

There are many difficulties with implementation, however. These include the complexity of assessing certification schemes and challenges in allowing evidence of sustainability from alternative documentation. Public procurement policies cannot be expected to solve all problems immediately, and it was proposed that implementers consider a phased approach.

Market players expressed concerns about certain aspects of public procurement policies, including the procedures required, the diversity of approaches between countries and the risk of creating unnecessary trade barriers. They noted a risk that public procurement policies can discriminate against small-scale or community-run forest enterprises and less-developed countries.

At present, only wood products are subject to public procurement policies for ensuring sustainability. This fact, as well as possible excessive transaction costs, may lead to substitution by less environmentally friendly competing materials, such as plastics. This concern needs to be addressed.

In addition, public procurement policies cover only primary wood products. As a result, some unsustainably or illegally produced wood reaches markets in the form of value-added products, which circumvent such policies. The forum concluded that although

it may be technically difficult, governments should consider addressing value-added products in their public procurement policies. Some countries are already doing this.

It is important for countries and stakeholders to exchange information and to cooperate and coordinate actions in this area. The recounting of experiences showed that several countries that have public procurement policies are already working together.

The published proceedings will be available in early 2007. For more information, see: www.unece.org/trade/timber/docs/tc-sessions/tc-64/2006PolicyForum.htm

Forest products industry: producing and using renewable energy to mitigate climate change

The global forest products industry can play a significant part in combating climate change by optimizing the use of raw material, increasing efficiency, using renewable energy in the production process, producing bioenergy and expanding into biorefinery products, while developing the competitiveness of the sector.

This was the conclusion of the International Seminar on Energy and Forest Products Industry, held in Rome on 30 and 31 October 2006, in which intergovernmental organizations and the global forest product industry joined forces. Participants stressed that well integrated and carefully balanced energy and forest policies around the globe set the stage for these developments. Governments, industry, institutions and society at large each have a role to play and should work together.

The forest products industry is a major consumer of energy and used 6 percent of total industrial energy in 2003. But the industry also produces energy. It is the only sector that already generates approximately 50 percent of its own energy needs, the majority from renewable carbon-neutral biomass. But the industry can do better by increasing efficiency, reducing reliance on fossil fuel and expanding the use of renewable energy. Participants discussed ways for the industry to use and produce bioenergy and increase energy efficiency.

The seminar was organized jointly by FAO, the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations (ICFPA), in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD).

Proceedings of the meeting are available online: www.fao.org/forestry/site/34867/en/

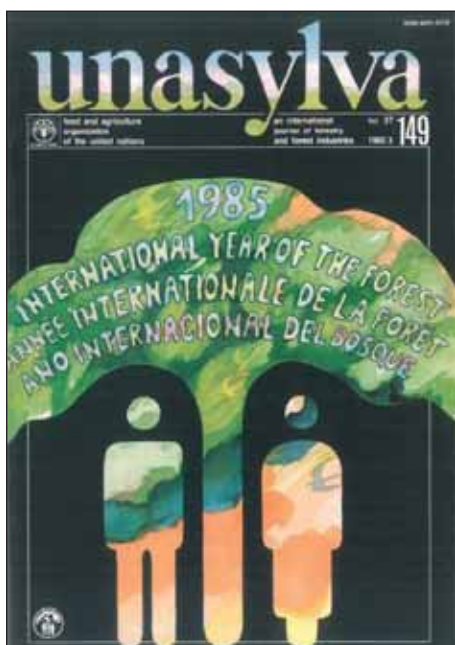
2011 declared International Year of Forests

On 20 December 2006, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution declaring 2011 as the International Year of Forests. The International Year of Forests will raise awareness that the world's forests are an integral part of global sustainable development, providing crucial economic, socio-cultural and environmental benefits. It will promote global action for the sustainable management, conservation and development of all types of forests, including trees outside forests.

To celebrate the year, activities will be organized to foster knowledge exchange on practical strategies to promote sustainable forest management and reverse deforestation and forest degradation. To help facilitate organization of these activities, governments are encouraged to create national committees and designate focal points in their respective countries, joining hands with regional and international organizations and civil society organizations. The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat has been tasked as the focal point for the implementation of the International Year of Forests.

This is the second time that forests will have their own "international year". The first was 1985, when the Council of FAO requested all member countries to give special recognition to forests during the year to focus world attention on the need for forest conservation and protection, to raise the political and public awareness of forest resources, to identify and draw attention to the factors threatening these forest resources and to mobilize people, and especially youth, to participate in forest-oriented activities (see *Unasylva* No. 149).

For more information, see the Web site for the International Year of Forests: www.un.org/esa/forests/2011/2011.html



First forestry project registered under the Clean Development Mechanism

The first afforestation/reforestation project under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol was registered in November 2006: Facilitating Reforestation for Guangxi Watershed Management in Pearl River Basin, China. While more than 400 projects have been registered to date under the CDM, until now there had been no registered afforestation/reforestation projects.

The project proposes to establish 4 000 ha of multiple-use forests in two counties of Guangxi Province, including approximately 830 ha on sites neighbouring two national nature reserves.

The newly registered project will generate income to poor farming communities by enabling the carbon sequestered by plantation forests to act as a "virtual cash crop" for local project beneficiaries, who will gain direct benefits from harvesting the trees as well as from the sale of carbon credits. While sequestering carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, forest restoration in this area also has a vital role in biodiversity conservation, soil and water conservation and poverty alleviation.

In order to ensure appropriate management measures, homogeneous tree growth, effective monitoring, maintenance of the carbon sequestered and reduction of risks from natural disasters during the crediting period, the project will largely be implemented through cooperative arrangements between farming communities and companies. The project activity arrangements are decided through a participatory process carried out at the village level. Local forestry agencies will provide the farming communities with training on plantation establishment and management and other technical services to ensure quality and reduce management risks. Income from the forest products and the certified emission reduction (CER) transactions will belong to the local farmers.

This project will be linked with a larger umbrella project, the Guangxi Integrated Forestry Development and Conservation Project (GIFDCP), which will help monitor the project's implementation and impacts, particularly the environmental and social impacts.

UNEP campaign to plant a billion trees

In November 2006, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) launched an appeal to the international community to plant a billion trees around the world in 2007 as part of a project to mitigate climate change and save the planet.

The "Plant for the Planet: Billion Tree Campaign" emphasizes that action to combat climate change does not have to be confined to the negotiating table. It urges all sectors of society – individuals, children, youth and community groups, schools, non-governmental organizations, business and industry, farmers, local authorities and



national governments – to plant trees as a small but practical step to combat what is probably the key challenge of the twenty-first century. Over 100 million tree planting pledges have already been received.

The campaign, inspired by Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Green Belt Movement activist Wangari Maathai and backed by Prince Albert II of Monaco and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), is increasingly attracting the support of partners around the world, including FAO.

UNEP stated that to make up for the loss of trees in the past decade, 130 million hectares, an area as large as Peru, would have to be reforested, amounting to planting some 14 billion trees every year for ten consecutive years. In that context the Billion Tree Campaign may be only a drop in the bucket, but it is intended as a symbolic yet practical expression of the determination to make a difference in developing and developed countries alike.

The campaign identifies four key areas for planting – degraded natural forests and wilderness areas; farms and rural landscapes; sustainably managed plantations; and urban environments – but even a single tree in a back garden is a start.

UNEP welcomes pledges of any magnitude, from a single tree to 10 million trees. Pledges can be entered on the campaign's Web site, where advice on tree planting is also available: www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign

United Nations begins drafting new international agreement on forests

Government experts, delegates, and representatives of intergovernmental organizations and civil society began drafting a new international agreement for the management of the world's forests at a United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Expert Meeting held in New York from 11 to 15 December 2006.

The creation of a new agreement could be an important step towards unblocking international forest policy efforts after years of deadlocked discussions. Countries agreed, at the sixth session of UNFF in February 2006, to adopt a voluntary instrument that would deliver an overarching and comprehensive framework for sustainable forest management and focus global attention on the importance of forests in the broader development agenda.

The agreement will touch on such issues as international trade and illegal harvesting of forest products, domestic forest law enforcement and governance. The main area of contention at the drafting table in December was the issue of financing sustainable forest management.

Although the agreement will not be legally binding, UNFF hopes that it will help harmonize efforts to monitor the state of the world's forests and ensure that forest resources are managed sustainably. It will recognize that States have sovereignty over their forest resources, while highlighting the importance of voluntary national measures, policies, actions and partnerships.

New Director General at IUCN

Julia Marton-Lefèvre, a global expert and leader in development and conservation, has been appointed Director General of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) beginning 1 January 2007. She replaces Achim Steiner, who has taken up leadership of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Marton-Lefèvre has been the Rector of the University of Peace in Costa Rica, mandated by the United Nations, which provides education, training and research on issues related to peace and conflict. Previously she was Executive Director of Leadership for Environment and Development (LEAD) International, a programme established by the Rockefeller Foundation. She has also held the posts of Executive Director of the International Council for Science (ICSU). She has been Vice Chair of the World Resources Institute, a member of the board of directors of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and a founding member of the China Council for Environment and Development.

The new Director General has stated that she is dedicated to "demonstrate the importance of conservation to a fairer and greener planet, as a continuation of my life-long dedication to the inter-related issues of conservation, environment, development, and peace and security".

Desertification and international policy

A joint international conference "Desertification and the International Policy Imperative", held from 17 to 19 December 2006 in Algiers, Algeria, focused on policies needed for successful dryland management. Organized within the framework of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD), this conference gathered over 250 representatives from governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The conference built on outcomes from other IYDD events and addressed:

- improving the policy focus on desertification;
- mobilization of resources and capacity;
- new initiatives to mainstream desertification issues into national and international policy processes;
- improved knowledge management initiatives;
- improved political viability, design and implementation of national initiatives;
- linkages among desertification, climate change, biodiversity and other global environmental issues.

The conference was organized into six sessions of expert presentations, followed by brief panel discussions. Representatives of Algeria, China and Morocco discussed the challenges faced at the regional and national levels in combating desertification, and the various approaches implemented.

The conference closed with a ceremony in which high-level representatives signed a proposal initiated by Algeria and Arab



ministers requesting that 2010–2020 be named as the decade of deserts and desertification at the next session of the United Nations General Assembly. In addition, six partner research institutes signed a commitment to support an international master's degree programme for drylands at the United Nations University (UNU).

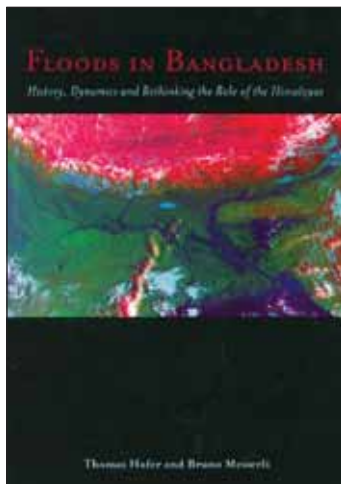
New initiative for sustainable land management in Central Asia

Representatives of five Central Asian countries and more than a dozen development cooperation partners met in Almaty, Kazakhstan on 16 November 2006 to launch the Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management (CACILM) – a ten-year

programme with envisaged financing of US\$1.4 billion, designed to restore, maintain and enhance the productivity of degraded land and improve the livelihoods of local communities.

With the instrumental role of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as lead agency and financing from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) among others, CACILM will aim to reduce land degradation through integrated, sustainable land management in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – where the livelihoods of nearly 20 million people living in rural areas are threatened by overgrazing, soil erosion, salt damage to irrigated land and desertification. CACILM is firmly rooted in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNCCD), to which all the Central Asian countries are parties.

For more information, see: adb.org/Projects/CACILM



Highland deforestation and lowland floods: are they really related?

Floods in Bangladesh: history, dynamics and rethinking the role of the Himalayas.

T. Hofer & B. Messerli. 2006. Tokyo, Japan, New York, USA & Paris, France, United Nations University Press & FAO. ISBN 92-808-1121-5.

Is it really true that deforestation and the land-use practices of Himalayan farmers are to blame for the monsoon floods that repeatedly devastate the plains of Bangladesh? A detailed analysis of historical rainfall and discharge patterns, sediment transport and deposition, and flooding intensities debunks this myth – implicating instead heavy rainfall, high groundwater tables and spring tides, lateral river embankments and the disappearance of natural water storage areas in the lowlands.

The floodplain of the Brahmaputra and Ganga rivers is a key food-crop production area, and accordingly has a high population density, growing urbanization and industrialization and high investment in infrastructure. The dilemma of increasing intensity of land use on the one hand, and susceptibility to floods on the other, has become increasingly serious there. Flooding has long been a regular occurrence in the floodplains, but since the 1950s the annual variation in flooding has increased and the large floods have become larger. In previous studies the increased variability and intensity were commonly attributed to human-induced degradation and deforestation in mountain areas. However, the authors of this publication suspected that this conclusion reflected a misinterpretation of the facts.

Floods in Bangladesh, the outcome of a research project carried out jointly by United Nations University, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Institute of Geography of the University of Bern, Switzerland and FAO, examined the highland-lowland linkages in more detail, tracing data back to the eighteenth century and basing their conclusions on 12 years of research on Himalayan ecology. They conclude that while mountain-dwellers have a responsibility to manage and use the environment sustainably, they are not necessarily to blame for flood catastrophes.

Since the 1990s, devastating floods have occurred in China, India, the United States and many European countries. The final chapter extends the lessons of this research to other river basins, addressing emerging issues of flood management and research priorities. Indeed, the authors deliberately avoid making site-specific recommendations, preferring to address the large-scale dimension of flooding.

The publication will therefore be of interest well beyond South Asia – not only to hydrologists and engineers, but also to development authorities, policy-makers, journalists and those interested in development issues in general.

Environmental impacts of livestock

Livestock's long shadow: environmental issues and options. H. Steinfeld, P. Gerber, T.

Wassenaar, V. Castel, M. Rosales & C. de Haan. 2006. Rome, FAO. ISBN 92-5-105571-7.

“Livestock’s contribution to environmental problems is on a massive scale, and its potential contribution to their solution is equally large.” This is the central premise of this comprehensive study, prepared under FAO’s Livestock, Environment and Development (LEAD) initiative.

The book examines livestock’s role in climate change, air pollution, water depletion and pollution, and biodiversity. In particular, they examine “environmental pressure points” such as the expansion of livestock into natural ecosystems and the need to reduce the environmental impact of intensive feed-crop production. The authors acknowledge that conversion of forests to make space for more livestock is a major cause of deforestation.

In addition to pointing out the problems caused by livestock rearing, the authors suggest a number of solutions. They discuss policy options in reference to climate change, water and biodiversity.

The authors conclude that considerable attention is being paid to the economic dimensions of livestock, but relatively little attention is focused on the environmental impacts. They suggest that improved institutional mechanisms are needed to address these concerns.



This book is intended to raise the awareness of both the technical and the general public, and is essential reading for policy-makers in sectors such as agriculture, environment, forestry and land-use planning. It can be used to assist decision-making at all levels from local to global, from private to public, from individual to corporate and from non-governmental to intergovernmental.

Assessing forest quality

Forest quality – assessing forests at a landscape scale. N. Dudley, R. Schlaepfer, W. Jackson, J.-P. Jeanrenaud & S. Stolton. 2006. London, UK & Sterling, Virginia, USA, Earthscan. ISBN 1-84407-278-9.

Forests are an important resource binding many aspects of human lives. In the present century it is not only deforestation that is a major environmental concern, but also the quality of forest – as not only the extent but also the nature of forest is changing.

Forest quality – assessing forests at a landscape scale looks at forest quality in terms of the values of all ecological and economic components in the forest landscape. It proposes a novel framework for quality assessment that can be tailored to individual needs and a range of outputs.

The book offers an array of concepts, methods, case studies and illustrations. It is divided into three parts: measuring forest quality, criteria of forest quality, and specific case studies in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The authors identify quality criteria in three groups – authenticity, environmental benefits and socio-economic benefits – and identify many possible indicators for each group.

The framework could serve many uses:

- to identify the current and future potential of forested landscapes from environmental and social perspectives;
- to distinguish between different levels of ecological forest quality at a landscape scale to aid in prioritizing conservation interventions;
- to plan conservation interventions within priority landscapes

identified in ecoregional planning processes or similar;

- as a basis for negotiating tradeoffs between different forest uses in forest landscape planning;
- in developing a monitoring and evaluation framework for a variety of conservation actions within a landscape (protection, management, restoration);
- to assess specific elements of forest quality as part of wider research;
- for long-term monitoring of conditions within a forested landscape.

This book will be particularly useful for professionals in field forestry and resource assessment, management and conservation. However, the approach could also be applied for assessment of other natural and cultural resources.

Cases in participatory natural resource management

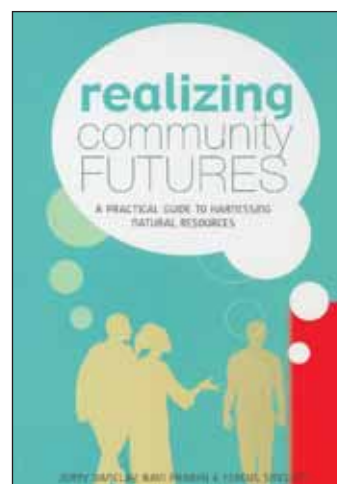
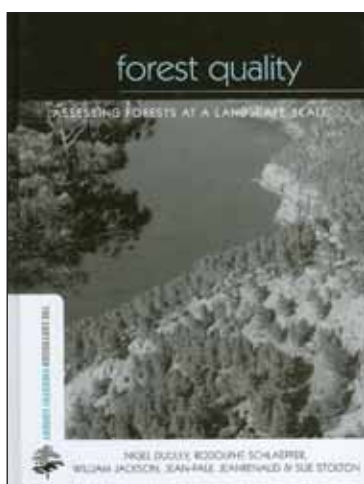
Realizing community futures – a practical guide to harnessing natural resources. J. Vanclay, R. Prabhu & F. Sinclair. 2006. London, UK & Sterling, Virginia, USA, Earthscan. ISBN 1-84407-383-1.

Participation is not simply a technique or approach to be applied at different stages of the project cycle; it is also a philosophy about how development work is approached and implemented to attain the goals of sustainable development.

This is the guiding principle of *Realizing community futures*, which aims to foster structured learning and participatory modelling for natural resource management. The book talks not only about models, but about successful experiences that can be a guide to communities.

Both theory and practice are introduced in clear, simple language. The authors advocate an approach involving these basic steps: recognize the potential; agree on a common problem; share a vision; make the vision explicit; substantiate assumptions; explore options and implications; and implement what has been learned.

The practice of the approach is highlighted through three successful case studies involving structured learning.





- Participatory modelling of monthly harvests by broomgrass collectors in Banatai village, Zimbabwe helped them manage the resource sustainably.
- Participatory modelling of rainfall, well-water depth and river flow helped overcome conflict over water resources in the arid state of Rajasthan, India.
- Competing land uses and natural resource depletion in the Mafungausti region of Zimbabwe were addressed by considering many weekly events.

The studies highlight the intimate relation between people and natural resources and illustrate how participatory approaches have provided solutions to socio-economic disparity and environmental concerns. The authors propose that their approach would be adaptable to all situations.

The book will be of interest to professionals and communities involved in natural resource management.

Competitive strategies of forest industries

The evolution of competitive strategies in global forestry industries: comparative perspectives. J.-A. Lamberg, J. Näsi, J. Ojala & P. Sajasalo, eds. 2006. Dordrecht, the Netherlands, Springer. ISBN 1-4020-4015-6.

Competition in the pulp and paper industry is intense. *The evolution of competitive strategies in global forestry industries: comparative perspectives* examines the rise and fall of companies in light of their competitive strategies, including the aggressive actions that some companies have taken in order to succeed.

The first section introduces the themes of industry evolution, competitive dynamics and path dependence, in addition to a more focused look at the pulp and paper industry itself.

The second part presents case studies of the performance and strategies of large North American and Nordic companies as well as smaller family-owned firms. The similarities and differences are examined, with differences in national contexts and cultures taken into account.



The third part of the book is devoted to the evolution of competition in the industry, including the changing roles of information, managerial cognition and organizational motivation.

The concluding comparisons and discussions point out that the changes seen over the past century in the aggressive and competitive nature of the industry have been small. Meanwhile success in the market remains transient.

Uniting contributions from experts in industrial management, economic history, strategic marketing, industrial engineering and institutional theory, this book should be of equal interest to both academic and business-oriented readers. As a study of the strategic undertakings of competitors within an industry, its findings may also be of interest beyond the forestry industry.

Ginseng in human history

Ginseng, the divine root. D.A. Taylor. 2006. Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA, Algonquin Books. ISBN 1-56512-401-4.

Can a root be so powerful as to change the destiny of the world? According to the author of *Ginseng, the divine root*, the answer is yes.

Ginseng is mainly grown around forests in China, the Korea Peninsula and Siberia in the Russian Federation, as well as in the eastern United States. Its use goes back 70 million years. Recognized for its medicinal virtues, ginseng has been used as a tonic and as a cure for a vast range of ailments from ancient times to the present. This publication gives a detailed description of its history, highlighting its impact on human cultures. It depicts the illegal trade, the legends and the rise and fall of kingdoms associated with it, as well as the experiences of the explorers, diggers, stealers and traders who sought to make their fortunes with it.

The author in the process uncovers ancient practices and traditions, international crimes and medical lore associated with the “root of life”.

While the book will clearly appeal to individuals with a specific interest in non-wood forest products, it offers stimulating reading for all audiences – perhaps especially for those who sample the ginseng-based recipes provided in the appendix.

