

BUILDING ON SUCCESS: PROGRAMME EXPANDS FOCUS FROM FORESTS TO LANDSCAPES



WORKING FOR local forest stakeholders in 80 developing countries

WORKING TO empower forest stakeholders to participate in policy decisions and access financing

WORKING WITH forest departments and a range of forest stakeholders

WORKING THANKS TO Sweden, Finland, France, Germany, Norway, EU, USA, Austria, Ireland, the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Paraguay, UK, the World Bank, Tropenbos International, and other resource partners

FAO's National Forest Programme (NFP) Facility illustrates that even in the world's poorest countries, transferring small grants to support local organizations can have a significant impact. The Facility promoted sharing of best practices among countries, supported the revision or formulation of new policies, and also supported successful regional initiatives that ranged from revitalizing forestry education in eastern Africa to developing a strategy for forest-industry development in the Congo Basin.

In Guatemala, a national alliance of community foresters, made up of indigenous people and forest-user groups, received small grants to facilitate meetings and set up communication networks to influence national and international policy. Within two years, it had become a political force representing 400 000 forest users.

In Liberia, in spite of logging bans, corrupt operators continued cutting forests and exporting timber. A small



Between 2002 and 2012, the FAO National Forest Programme (NFP) Facility allocated some 900 small grants to NGOs, academia and government agencies as well as to forest-user associations, indigenous communities and other organizations in 80 developing countries. The grants, averaging around US\$25 000, aimed to foster country leadership and strengthen the participation of stakeholders in developing and implementing national forest programmes. The impact of these grants shows that, with local support and participation, forests can serve as engines of growth to propel economic activity at all levels. Now the programme is moving forward as the new Forest & Farm Facility. It will continue providing small grants to local producer organizations, giving communities the opportunity and capacity to maintain and improve their own forests, and a voice in policy-making processes. It also will work to raise awareness of the broad contribution of forests – focusing on establishing links with other sectors that depend on or are affected by this precious resource, such as agriculture, energy, tourism and the economy.

grant linked geographically dispersed forest communities that were trying to protect their forests. In 2010, with Facility support, Liberia established a National Forest Programme Platform,

comprising the National Forest Forum and 15 Country Forest Forums with a multistakeholders' steering committee. Forest stakeholders now use this platform for discussion



30% of the world's forests are managed by local people – smallholders, women, forest communities and indigenous peoples.

of key issues related to natural resources and increased information dissemination on policy issues.

In Cambodia, awareness-raising and capacity-building activities supported by the Facility have improved national capacity to participate in National Forest Programme processes. Establishing working relationships among civil society and community groups, development partners and government representatives, and ensuring trust building, confidence raising and capacity development, were all great challenges and took significant time to evolve. Yet these efforts have proved to be a significant achievement in Cambodia.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTION OF LOCAL FOREST STAKEHOLDERS

Today, 30 percent of the world's forests are managed by local people – smallholders, women, forest communities and indigenous peoples. Although in most cases their management is informal, these forest-users still make enormous contributions to the success of investments on the ground. Yet they often remain marginalized from decision-making processes and isolated from economic and market opportunities.

As the Facility recognized in the 80 countries where it operated, smallholders will not be part of the national process unless they are organized. Thanks to the awareness raised by its local implementing organizations, the contribution of the forest sector has become more visible in partner countries.

Those grants, specifically targeted to involve smallholder stakeholders in policy and legal framework discussions, proved that rural populations could benefit economically from forests, significantly increasing their food security.

RAISING VISIBILITY OF FOREST SECTOR

Building on its success in establishing stakeholder groups and giving foresters a larger voice in the government, the Facility's new phase will be incorporated as part of the Forest & Farm Facility. It will continue to provide guidance as well as small grants to local groups, enabling them to organize themselves better so they will have representation in the process. However, as its name implies, the Forest & Farm Facility will increase its focus on "cross-sectoral integration", looking at the landscape rather than just the forest.

This means it will work to raise awareness of forests' connection with other sectors that depend on, or are impacted by, forests, such as agriculture, energy, water, trade, environment and even the tourism sector. Often the forest sector has been sidelined, not considered a major contributor to national GDP or employment generation since so much of the activity is informal and contributions are often not accounted for in statistical information. Too often, the contribution of forests to economic life is not fully appreciated until the land begins to disappear.

Looking to the future, the new Forest & Farm Facility will continue to help stakeholders organize themselves so they have representation and a voice in forest- and farm-related policy debates. But with its broader landscape focus, it will also ensure the sector itself has a more visible role in policy-makers' decisions on poverty reduction, food security and climate change.