



SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Forests cover 30 percent of global land area, contain most of the world's terrestrial biodiversity and more carbon than the atmosphere. They provide livelihoods for more than a billion people and are vital for conservation of biodiversity, energy supply, and soil and water protection.

Forests also have a major role in climate change mitigation, trapping and storing more than a trillion tonnes of carbon each year, yet at the same time, destruction of forests sends six billion tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere. All of this indicates the crucial need for sustainable forest management (SFM). Sustainable forest management curbs forest degradation and deforestation while increasing direct benefits to people and the environment through sound policies and sustainable practices. At the local level, SFM contributes to peoples' livelihoods, income generation and employment. At the environmental level, it contributes through, for example, carbon sequestration and water and soil conservation.

Broad involvement in developing and implementing SFM

FAO promotes SFM by supporting Member Countries directly through field projects and by working at international level to address and help solve regional and global forest-related issues. In strengthening and widening the practice of SFM, it is critical to make sure that all – from those who harvest mushrooms or cut trees to those who process timber and those who set policies – are involved in the process of developing SFM strategies and also have the capacity to implement them. Having the right data and information in order to make sound decisions to this end is essential.

FOREST ASSESSMENT MONITORS GLOBAL PROGRESS TOWARD SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

FAO conducted its first Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) in 1946, just one year after its founding, and has conducted them at five to ten year intervals ever since. The FRA aims to collate the most accurate information possible for supporting national, regional and global forest decision making. FRA 2010, the most comprehensive forest assessment ever undertaken, worked with more than 900 contributors in collecting and analyzing critical information about forests from 233 countries and areas. FAO continually provides support to raise national capacity to collect and analyse data, and enable countries to contribute their data to the FRA.

FAO FOCUS AREA



EXAMPLES OF IMPACT



©FAO/Cesar Alvarado

SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT – ON THE GROUND

In an effort to find out “what works and why” in SFM, FAO has compiled and documented more than 80 successful cases that demonstrate the economic, social and environmental benefits that can be achieved under SFM. Through their varied approaches and strategies in multiple contexts, these examples show that good forest management is a powerful conservation practice, which can reduce deforestation and maintain environmental services, as well as a powerful development option that can help reduce rural poverty and improve living conditions.

PROCESS: The 80 cases are a source of inspiration for putting SFM into action. Over the decades, FAO has developed and shared a host of tools and training

materials to support forestry activities. Now, its goal is to pull all of these unique and widely used materials together into one cohesive package for supporting SFM on the ground and replicate exemplarity – that will not only help farmers and forest communities with technical issues such as reforestation and pest management, but will also help them establish community and self-help forest user groups.

IMPACT: This integrated package will contribute to expanding SFM exemplarity all over the world, boosting the role of forests in improving living conditions of rural populations and contributing to national economies, as well as enhancing their role in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT – FOREST GOVERNANCE

In order for countries to improve the management and governance of their forests, they must first look at what is already being done, determine what works and what doesn't, and bring together all relevant stakeholders to determine how to move forward, working toward common goals.

PROCESS: The National Forest Programme Facility, hosted by FAO, supports more than 70 countries in developing and implementing country-led participatory and cross-sectoral approaches to improve forest policies and programmes. In 2011, FAO published a Framework for Assessing and Monitoring Forest Governance and accompanied it with support to a range of countries in diagnosing, assessing and monitoring forest governance.

IMPACT: By looking at the quality of forest governance and improving their systems for monitoring it – for example, through determining where public money is spent and the progress in implementing plans and strategies – countries can determine whether forest resources are used efficiently. They use the information to review and improve their forest governance and, in turn, strengthen their national forest programmes.



©FAO/Simon Maina

Cover photo: ©FAO/Sean Gallagher