

## **Management Summary**

The tropical rain forests rank unquestioned among the most important natural heritage of mankind: They accommodate a majority of the biological variety and play at the same time an important role for world climate, water supply and soil preservation. In view of the ongoing tropical forest destruction, new approaches to achieve a sustainable use of this important natural resource are gaining in importance.

For economic science purposes the world-wide tropical forest decrease presents itself as an externality problem, which economists try to solve by internalizing the externalities to achieve Pareto optimal environmental conditions. Since the optimal allocation – due to the value of standing forests - seems to come along with a reduced deforestation rate, there is conformity between allocation theoretical and ecological targets relating to the tropical rain forest use. However, for a multidimensional sustainability approach – as used by the UNCED – with ecological, economic and social aspects, Pareto optimality is not an adequate target figure since distribution aspects are completely excluded. But especially these distribution aspects are crucial, since tropical rain forests do not only represent ecosystems that are worth to conserve, but are at the same time habitat for millions of humans. The claim for a complete rain forest preservation (ecological sustainability) collides thus in many cases with the economic needs of the rain forest inhabitants (economic sustainability).

Central objective of the book is the development of applicable approaches to achieve a sustainable tropical forest use in special consideration of the apparent trade-off between ecological and economic sustainability. The publication consists of four parts and seventeen chapters. Part A derives – based on an economic and sustainability-oriented analysis of the tropical forests – two possible approaches, which are concretized in the following parts B and C: Part B focuses on the description and evaluation of possible environmental policies and internalization concepts, part C covers the conservation-by-commercialisation (CbC) approach, which aims to increase the “economic utility” resulting from a sustainable forest utilization. This part mainly highlights the development of a strategic planning process for the sustainable use of rain forest areas to maximize incomes for forest users in special consideration of non-wood forest products (NWFP). Following up, part D outlines the possibilities of internationalization activities in the NWFP sector and describes the results of a three-year empirical study about the commercialization of the NWFP “Açaí” in Germany.