2002 - 2012
10 years of NFP Facility

Summary

National Forest Programme
FACILITY
nurturing the process

Europe

2012-2017 Programme Document
Summary

Background

The National Forest Programme Facility (NFP Facility) was established in 2002, in response to a call from the global forest community to support the implementation of their national forest programmes (nfps), as an important means to address forest issues in a comprehensive manner, including across sectors. In this regard, the NFP Facility assisted countries to develop and implement programmes that addressed local needs and national priorities related to forests, in accordance with the internationally agreed principles of country leadership, stakeholder participation, and cross-sectoral collaboration. The NFP Facility focused especially on knowledge sharing and capacity development in the forestry sector to ensure the informed participation of a broad range of stakeholders.

Management and Operations

The Facility has been managed and operated by a core Team at FAO HQ, gradually expanding in size over time to cope with the growing number of partnership agreements and corresponding number of small grants. At the end of the second phase, the Facility Team consisted of 6 full-time professional staff and 3 full-time administrative staff at FAO HQ, 3 full-time professional staff in the field, as well as 2 part-time coaches. Throughout the 10 year period, the Facility has enjoyed excellent working relations and support from FAO, in particular from the Forest Department at HQ and the field offices in partner countries. In total, some 20 FAO officers (half at HQ and half in the field) have devoted considerable time and energy in country coaching and capacity building activities implemented at country and regional levels. The Facility’s governance structure was established from the start of operations in 2002, to support strategic decision making and donor requirements. It has consisted of two main bodies, a Steering Committee (SC) and a Donor Support Group (DSG). The total expenditures of the NFP Facility programme amounts to US$ 45 Million, with 16 different donors contributing funds.

Partner countries and grants

The Facility has signed partnership agreements with 70 countries and 4 regional organizations covering the Small Island States in the Caribbean and the Pacific. In total, more than 80 countries have been supported. Almost 900 small grants, through in-country transparent bidding processes, have been allocated over the 10 years. During the ten-year period, Africa received 44% of the funds for country support, while Latin America and the Caribbean received 32 %, followed by Asia with 14%.

Since the start of operations in 2002, about 75% of the grants have been established in support of civil society organizations (Educational and Research Organisations, NGOs & CBOs, and Private Sector Associations), while 25% of the funds were channeled in support of the Central Forestry Agencies (CFA), such as the Departments of forestry and the Decentralized Forestry Departments (DFA).

Half of the grants since 2002 have been allocated in support of the nfp principle “participation and partnerships”. Only 15% were in support of “Cross sectoral linkages” and this principle remain a major challenge in nfp implementation.
NFP Facility Modus Operandi

Eligible countries (low or medium HDI according to UNDP annual lists) were invited, through FAO representations, other appropriate channels and information posted on the Facility web, to apply for a partnership by submitting a Concept Note (CN). The Facility Partnerships were established on the basis of a Concept Note, and since the start the link between the Facility and the country was based on a request by the country. It was facilitated through a transparent process of the grants allocation led by a National Multi Stakeholder Committee (NMSC) in which the NFP focal point (Forest Department) and direct involved civil society actors were represented. In 2008 the OIMES (Outcome and Impact Monitoring and Evaluation System) was developed and implemented in 62 partner countries for monitoring the nfp process and for assessing the impact of the NFP Facility activities at national level. The Facility modus operandi was very much coherent with the core nfp principles of country ownership and encouraging stakeholder participation. The process for allocating grants was crucial in strengthening the nfp process itself in terms of the analysis, formulation, implementation and monitoring phases. It had a positive impact in all Facility partner countries.

In addition, the Facility has been actively involved over the 10 years in the continuous improvements made on the FAO LoA (Letter of Agreement) procedures. It is now a very effective and efficient mechanism for small grant support to civil society organizations.

Country and Regional Achievements

The Indicators selected in OIMES by the countries having received the most positive impact from the implementation of Facility supported activities show the following main successful achievements:

- Capacity of stakeholders to implement nfp related activities increased;
- NMSC solid platform established;
- Stronger stakeholders’ involvement in the policy process;
- Awareness raised and information shared through communication on best practices and forest policy issues;
- Forest policy revised or newly formulated;
- Nfp coordination mechanism established and forestry sector profile raised.

The NFP Facility has also been active at regional level supporting several initiatives such as:

- The Development of compensatory mechanisms linking forest and water in Central America and the Caribbean.
- The revitalization of forestry education in four Eastern African countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia).
- The development of strategy for forest industry development in the Congo Basin.
- The involvement of young generations with the Kids to Forests Initiative.
- South – South exchange of experiences on forest financing incentives for small holders.

Capacity building

Training is an important pillar of Facility support in the countries. Indeed 25% of the grants were allocated to Training activities.
The “Nfp's for All” initiative was launched in 2005, through which key stakeholders in the nfp process at national and sub-national levels had their capacity enhanced for the joint development and implementation of country-led nfp processes.

Thematic training modules on “Enhancing Participation in nfps” and “Collaborative Conflict Management for enhanced nfps” were developed by FAO and the NFP Facility in 2008, tested and implemented on country request since 2009.

In order to create ownership and resident capacities at the regional level, training of trainers’ on the Participation and Conflict Management modules were developed in 2009 and training implemented for improving the capability of selected trainers from the all the regions.

**National Forest Financing Strategies (NFFS)**

In 2007, the NFP Facility, together with FAO and other partners, started a process to support the development and implementation of national forest financing strategies (NFFS) and innovative financial instruments. The process has so far been initiated in 13 countries.

One of the lessons learned from the country-level work is that public and/or private funding is often available to finance a diversity of forest activities, however, the forest sector is often ill-prepared to effectively access and use these sources of finance. A key limitation is institutional weakness along many dimensions: Knowledge of financing language, instruments, and processes; Isolation from other sectors and from other key stakeholders within the sector; a legacy of dependence on public resources, both domestic and international with a focus on limited instruments; and failure to adequately improve the climate for investment and market development.

The process of developing a national forest financing strategy has tried to address these weaknesses and successful results have been achieved in many of the countries, particularly in Latin America.

**GFP**

Growing Forest Partnerships (GFP) was initiated in 2009 with the aim of catalyzing and reinforcing effective partnerships. The Facility became active in the preparation of the GFP initiative together with FAO, World Bank, IUCN and IIED. The GFP created an opportunity to form better partnerships and coordination, based on existing nfp processes and mechanisms supported by the Facility. NFP Facility/GFP was operational in five pilot countries, including Ghana, Guatemala, Liberia, Mozambique and Nepal. Strategies and processes were different in each country, but generally included a combination of capacity building, information sharing and partnership facilitation activities.

NFP Facility/GFP have made significant strides towards addressing fundamental power imbalances between local people and national and international actors. It has sensitized governments to the need for adequate participation, provided space for ‘local policy dialogue’ and ‘community forest fora’ and invested in research, capacity building and pilot implementation to provide evidence on which sound decisions can be based.

**Information Services**

The Facility Information and Communication Strategy evolved over the 10 years following the development of the activities in the countries, the requests formulated by the countries and the analysis of the Facility Information team based on coaches’ experience in the countries. The following lines of actions were developed:
Making information on nfp and lessons learnt of Facility supported activities available on the Web.

Developing dynamic knowledge dissemination and learning processes.

Enhancing knowledge and capacities of nfp practitioners worldwide.

Promoting Facility approaches and results.

A Country Support Database was created for the Facility in FORIS to store and to monitor detailed information about the grants allocated by the Facility. This Database connected to the website, allows displaying automatically the information on activities in the countries on the Facility website.

External evaluations

Since the start of operations in 2002, the NFP Facility has been reviewed by independent external teams on three occasions (2005, 2007 and 2010). The nfps and the NFP Facility have also been discussed at the biannual FAO Regional Forestry Commissions and Committee on Forestry (COFO) since the start in 2002. The governance of the Facility was recognized to be innovative and exceptionally good. It was also noted that the added value of the NFP Facility was realized through:

- opening up the debate on forestry to the wider public;
- the provision of a platform and linkages for review and learning;
- de-blocking of NFP processes by financing key activities to ease-up bottlenecks;
- building partnerships within and outside the national forestry sector;
- bringing into the public domain results and lessons learned from different NFP process.

Based on the weaknesses analysed in the evaluations such as the implementation constraints related to inter-sectoral coordination, the isolation of Forest institutions, the sustainability of nfps at country level, some recommendations were made to the Facility to adopt a new approach to maintain the relevance of its objectives.

Lessons on the implementation of the nfp

In 2010, FAO and the Facility conducted a study based on country inputs from the focal points and the stakeholders on how NFPS work in practice. OIMES with the assessment of the NFP Matrix has provided precious additional elements to draw conclusion on the partner countries experiences in implementing nfps.

NFPS are mainly perceived as a strategic planning document, and as one instrument among others. Today we find a variety of different institutional and organizational setups for NFP implementation in the countries. Some use existing structures (from former initiatives) to apply the NFP approach and principles, others have established new management and consultation structures. The lead coordination of the NFP process is rooted within the ministry/line agencies which are responsible for forestry. As to the overarching organization of the NFP process, countries have experienced the following challenges and bottlenecks:

- Even if structures are in place their functioning is hindered by parallel frameworks and processes, a lack of capacities and in-adequate definition of roles and mandates of the different actors.
- Low level rooting of NFP coordination hinders recognition and power of NFPS.

The different nfp phases are implemented with distinctly different intensities. Whereas much has been done in nearly all countries in respect to the first two phases (analysis and policy formulation& planning), there is much less progress in implementation and M&E. When it comes to
implementation, many countries complain about slow progress of the institutional reform and field activities.

Progress has been made in establishing mechanisms for participation (stakeholder committees, national forest forum etc) in most of the countries. Problems are still encountered in involving remote community and IP groups and the private sector.

Most countries have not been able to establish the necessary cross-sector linkages nor have they been able to integrate forestry into overarching policies. The forest sector remains isolated and to a large extent excluded from the higher level national policy dialogue. There is still a lack of recognition of the national importance, economical as well as social and environmental, of forests. This could be attributed to the lack of financial data on the contribution of the informal forestry sector as well the forest environmental services to the national economy. The limited communication capacity and competence of forest administrations is another identified reason for the missing link.

The NFP framework has contributed to important changes, however, more needs to be done. Changes are both needed and demanded to improve its implementation:

- A comprehensive governance framework for forest-related activities is essential for progress towards SFM.
- While many NFP processes have been effective in developing policies and action plans, more emphasis is needed on implementation and monitoring.
- To be country-owned and country-led, NFPs need sufficient capacity and authority.
- Involving stakeholders is critical for the legitimacy and effectiveness of an NFP.
- To be effective, NFPs demand a broad intersectoral approach.

**Remaining challenges**

Many challenges related to poor governance mechanisms, inadequate skills, access to market opportunities, lack of coordination amongst multiple funding streams and lack of public awareness on the complexity and multiple values of forests, hinder effective delivery of the current investments (e.g REDD+) into locally managed forests and farms.

The forestry sector is to a large extent still acting in isolation having limited contacts and dialogue with other related sectors like, agriculture, water, energy, infrastructure, mining, economy, finance, tourism etc. One of the reasons is that the general public and most politicians are not aware of the complexity of values and interests intrinsic to forests and trees. Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) is still regarded as a very technical issue dealing with logging and plantations, and the social and environmental values and services provided by forests and trees are not recognized. For the farmer all forest products (timber, fuel, NTFP) and most of the services (water, soil protection, biodiversity, climate etc.) are well known and the land is used in an integrated manner to provide for a sustainable livelihood. Organizing farmers and providing multi sector platforms where they can make their voices heard will have a direct impact on the awareness of the public and of politicians on the multi-functions provided by forests and trees.

**Proposal for a 3rd phase: “Forest & Farm Facility”**

To address these challenges the Facility in the proposed next phase, the Forest & Farm Facility (FFF), will enhance the organization and capacity of local people so they can engage in local, regional and national level policy dialogues and decision-making processes. Local people will be able to contribute their ideas and knowledge, helping to ensure that forest and farm policies improve their livelihoods, food security and the sustainability of the productive land on which they rely. To complement this, the Facility will also support governments to better coordinate multi-stakeholder, multi-sector
cooperation and dialogue. In this way, the Facility will catalyze more equitable and inclusive governance and finance mechanisms at national, sub national and local levels. Specifically the Facility will, based on demand, provide support towards addressing the above mentioned challenges by:

- Promoting Equitable Governance Mechanisms;
- Improving coordination amongst multiple funding streams;
- Enhancing skills and access to market opportunities;
- Contributing to create public awareness.