

FAO Support to Forestry Strategy Note

Analysis of Needs and FAO Comparative Advantages in Forestry

The continuing loss and degradation of forests in many countries pose a critical challenge for the global community. A strategic approach is needed to ensure that healthy forests can sequester carbon and thus reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help to mitigate climate change, conserve biodiversity, safeguard wildlife habitat and protect watersheds. Rural livelihoods often depend on productive forests that support employment and income, thus reducing poverty. There is a need to improve the quality of forest management, reforestation and forest recovery after natural and human-induced disasters.

FAO has many comparative advantages for addressing these needs:

- An intergovernmental mandate to assist members in all aspects of Forestry (social, economic and environmental) and all types of forest ecosystems.
- An authoritative global source of information on forests, including deforestation rates, carbon storage, forest products and trade, forest policies and institutions.
- Global forestry leadership through the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and the Regional Forestry Commissions; by hosting the National Forest Programme Facility; and through partnerships such as Collaborative Partnership on Forests and the Mountain Partnership.
- Experience, knowledge and credibility in supporting national efforts to develop capacity in forest policies and institutions.
- Leadership in developing standards and guidelines related to sustainable forest management.
- Mandate and expertise to address forest issues from a cross-sectoral point of view, including the interface between forests and other land uses; technical expertise is located in offices around the world to facilitate direct support to member countries.

Vision and Objectives

FAO's vision for Forestry is to enhance human well-being through support to member countries in the sustainable management of the world's forests and trees. FAO's work in Forestry will make a significant contribution to achieving Members' Goals for by focusing on the following objectives:

- Decisions about forestry, forests and trees are based on timely and accurate information and stakeholder participation in decisions at all levels.
- The contributions of forests and forestry to food security and society are increased, including the role of forests in livelihoods and poverty alleviation. Investments in forestry are increased, and forestry is accorded an increasing priority in development.
- The health, vitality, and area of forests show a stable or increasing trend in most countries and ecosystems, thereby increasing the contribution of forests to mitigating climate change, conserving biodiversity, and improving water quality. Good management practices are implemented along a continuum ranging up to the landscape level, including interactions with other sectors.

Expected Outcomes for FAO work in Forestry

- Information and capacity building support provided by FAO has made a major impact in countries' efforts to reduce deforestation and forest degradation. An increasing area of forest is managed under internationally agreed standards and guidelines. The role of good practices in managing forests in mitigating and adapting to climate change is widely recognized.
- Countries have effective support to address cross-sectoral conflicts in national planning processes. Countries address issues related to the interface between agriculture, livestock and forests, including the sustainable development of bio-energy resources and the sound management and protection of water resources; effective land management planning results in improved land use.
- Investments in forests and forestry are substantially increased.
- Capacity for national forest institutions and forest policy development and implementation are strengthened. Participatory processes such as national forest programmes are operational in most countries.
- Forest-based enterprises are developed that promote livelihoods and reduce poverty. Social and economic factors that affect forests are analyzed; FAO regional and global forest sector outlook studies are prepared and used across key sectors.
- Decisions about forests at all levels are based on improved information provided by FAO, and made available through national and global forest assessments and statistics about the forestry sector, strengthening linkages between knowledge and policies.
- Support to effective national policies and programmes for the protection and conservation of forest ecosystems, biodiversity, wildlife, and watersheds will have been implemented.

Implementation Strategies

- Advocate policies and develop guidelines to reduce deforestation and forest degradation and to increase forests under sustainable management and planted forests, recognizing the critical role of forests in mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- Strengthen policies and institutional capacities in member countries and support participatory national forest programmes.
- Improve information about forests through national, regional and global forest assessments and statistics about the forestry sector, strengthening linkages between knowledge and policies.
- Serve as an authoritative source of information about forests, forestry policies and institutions, providing active leadership in the exchange of knowledge.
- Support enterprise development that promotes rural livelihoods and reduces poverty.
- Analyze social and economic factors that affect forests, and develop regional and global forest sector outlook studies.
- Provide technical assistance to member countries to protect forests and to conserve and enhance forest ecosystems, biodiversity, wildlife, and watersheds.