



# Understanding *national forest programmes*

Guidance  
for practitioners



THE NATIONAL  
FOREST PROGRAMME  
**FACILITY**



The background of the cover is a white page with several thick, expressive yellow brushstrokes. One large, irregular stroke starts at the top left and curves across the top. Another stroke starts from the bottom left and curves upwards towards the center. A third stroke starts from the bottom left and curves across the bottom. A fourth stroke is a circular brushstroke that encircles the main title.

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NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMME FACILITY  
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
Rome, 2006

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The process was guided by Cornelia Sepp (ECO Consulting Group) and Eduardo Mansur (FAO) who prepared the draft. A wide range of nfp experts and practitioners reviewed the draft text and provided valuable inputs. At the risk of overlooking some of those who contributed, it would be inappropriate not to recognize explicitly the support provided by Bernd Liss, Herman Savenije, Kees van Dijk, Cathrien de Pater, Carlos Borge, Daniel Draeger, and various FAO experts involved in national forest programme development, especially Thomas Enters, Dominique Reeb, Johan Lejeune, Jean-Louis Blanchet, Tiina Vahanen, Fernando Salinas, Ignacio Bustos, Simmathiri Appannah, Patrick So and Marguerite France-Lanord.



## Preface

One of the main achievements of the international dialogue on forests since the 1990s has been the common agreement among participants that all countries should develop national forest programmes (nfps) to lead and steer their forest policy development and implementation processes in a participatory and intersectoral way. More than 130 countries are now in some stage of planning or implementing nfps.

Much has been learned in the ten years since FAO published “*Basic principles and operational guidelines – formulation, execution and revision of national forest programmes*”, which served as a guide for the start-up of many nfp processes. The knowledge and experience presented in this publication will help consolidate nfps as genuinely participatory, cross-sectoral processes for achieving sustainable forest management. The book is the result of an action-learning exercise fuelled by the sharing of experience worldwide.

*Understanding national forest programmes* has been developed as part of “*Nfps for All*”, a capacity-building initiative launched by FAO, the National Forest Programme Facility, the Netherlands, Germany and Finland. It is directed to all those involved in nfps, either in their development or their implementation. It aims to promote understanding and facilitate coordination, collaboration and capacity building among stakeholders, for participatory formulation and implementation of forest and forest-related policies. It is not a recipe book, but rather a guidance document intended to inspire thinking and acting on best practices that correspond to the conditions of individual countries.

The text is structured in four main parts. The first part describes how the nfp concept evolved from the international dialogue on forests. The second proposes the clustering of the nfp principles agreed on by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and provides guidance on how to approach and assess them at the country level. The third part discusses the nfp process in terms of an iterative cycle of analysis, forest policy and planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The last part provides information about opportunities for knowledge sharing and support initiatives that can help nfp practitioners achieve their goals.

We sincerely hope that the document will provide inspiration for country-led nfp processes to evolve and will motivate nfp practitioners in their efforts to move ahead. Feedback from readers is very welcome.

**Eva Müller**

Chief

Forestry Policy and Institutions Service

FAO

**François Wencélius**

Manager

National Forest Programme Facility





# Acronyms

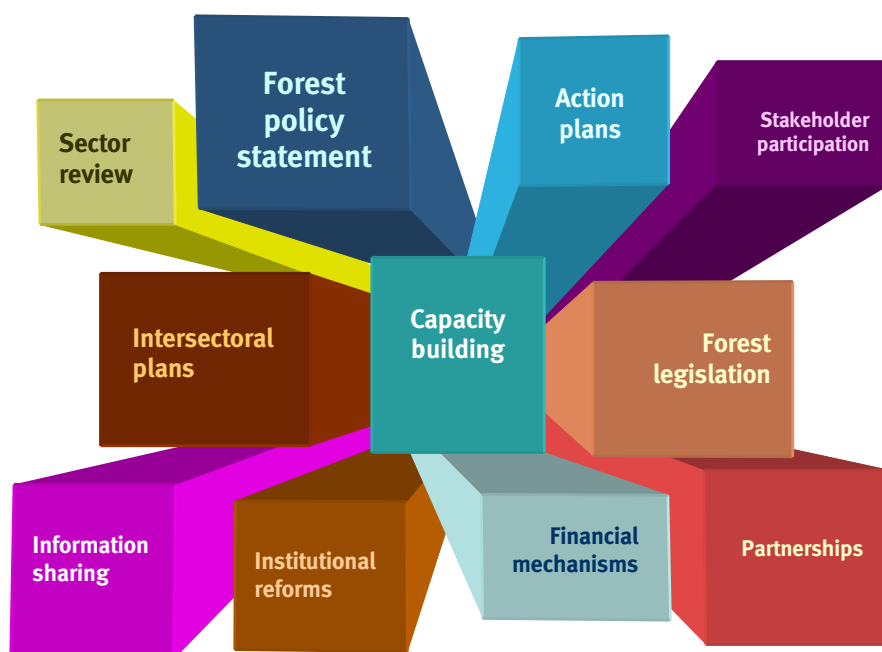
ACTO, OTCA	Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (Organización del Tratado de Cooperación Amazónica)
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
COMIFAC	Commission en charge des forêts d'Afrique centrale
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
DFID	Department for International Development, United Kingdom
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EFCA	Central American Forestry Strategy
ETFRN	European Tropical Forest Research Network
Facility	National Forest Programme Facility
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FONAFIFO	National Forest Financing Fund (Fondo Nacional de Financiamiento Forestal)
FSCC	Forestry Sector Coordination Committee, Uganda
FSSP	Forest Sector Support Programme, Viet Nam
GDP	Gross domestic product
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
IFF	Intergovernmental Forum on Forests
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IPF	Intergovernmental Panel on Forests
IWP	International Forest Policy project, GTZ (Internationale Waldpolitik)
nfp	national forest programme
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PRA	Participatory rural appraisal
PROFOR	Program on Forests
SFM	Sustainable forest management
SWOT	Strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

TFAP	Tropical Forestry Action Plan
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests

# 1. National forest programmes: a concept for sustainable forest management

## Definition, origin and added value of the nfp concept

The term “national forest programme” is a generic expression for a wide range of approaches towards forest policy formulation, planning and implementation at the subnational and national levels. The primary source of the term “national forest programme” as applied today is the final report on the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (ECOSOC, 1997). As one of the most important outcomes of the forest policy dialogue after the UNCED world summit in Rio, nfp is the first commonly agreed framework in pursuit of sustainable forest management, which is applicable to all countries and to all types of forests. Hence, an nfp serves as a framework to put international agreements on sustainable forest management into practice and is understood as an umbrella term – a product of consensus – to which all participating countries agree.



*National forest programme process*

### Spelling: “nfp” or “NFP”?

In line with the established use within many organizations, the term ‘nfp’ is spelled with lower-case letters when it is used to signify the general concept. Some countries use upper-case letters to denote their own specific process. Of course, many countries use other terms to designate their nfp, such as National Forest Development Strategy, Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Forestal, etc. In these cases, other acronyms may be used.

At the country level, nfp is a country-specific process which provides a framework and guidance for:

- ◆ country-driven forest sector development;
- ◆ national implementation of internationally agreed concepts (such as sustainable forest management), agreed obligations (e.g. UN conventions) and proposals (e.g. Proposals for Action drawn up during the IPF/IFF process);
- ◆ external support: nfps have been declared the common frame of reference for forest-related international cooperation by the world’s major organizations and fora and most bilateral donors.

Despite their name, nfp processes also occur at subnational and regional levels (see Chapter 4), under the auspices of subnational entities (e.g. provincial authorities) or regional (multicountry) bodies or initiatives. Depending on the country and the regional context, nfps can have manifold sizes and shapes. While the international community has provided certain guidance in terms of commonly agreed responsibilities and good practices regarding forest management, the countries agree that forest sector development is essentially a matter of national sovereignty. In this respect, the nfp concept was consciously coined as a generic term, rather than a methodology with a “book of rules”.

This broad definition leaves the nfp concept open to country-specific interpretation and adaptation. Depending on a given perspective and focus, an nfp can be a process, a set of approaches, or a policy framework. However, it should be mentioned that it is not meant to be a mere process of government planning. Instead, it embraces and extends to the whole cycle of forest sector development: analysis, policy formulation and planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in a fully participatory way.

The nfp concept can be said to be a response to ongoing problems in the forest sector (cf. Box opposite) as well as to the limited success of previous initiatives aimed at reversing negative trends.

## Background of the nfp concept

Nfps were conceived in response to:

- a) *Global concerns about deforestation and related phenomena in the forest sector.* Despite all national and international efforts, the annual loss of forests during the past decade amounted to approximately 13 million hectares worldwide (FAO, 2005).
- b) *Perceived limited contribution of the forest sector to development:*
  - opportunities of local forests for poverty reduction remain unexplored or unused;
  - the potential of a nation's forest resources (in economic, social and ecological respects) is neglected and/or undervalued;
  - nations fail in their attempts to draw broad, multigenerational services from their forest assets.
- c) *Expanded knowledge about the underlying causes of deforestation.* Apart from the rising demand for forest products, as well as illegal logging and overexploitation, the impact of political and socio-economic factors outside the forest sector was increasingly realized (unfavourable macro-economic framework conditions, institutional deficiencies, lack of political will, inadequate legislation and law enforcement, insecure land tenure, rural poverty and centralized decision with insufficient participation of civil society).
- d) *Political and administrative tendencies in many countries.* These include diversifying demands for forest functions, emergence of new service providers, devolution of responsibilities and resources to smaller administrative units (including local communities) and increasing capacity and readiness of these to adopt responsibility (decentralization).
- e) *Increasing global attention to processes of democratization and good governance.* These have been accompanied by the call for a more equitable distribution of costs and benefits in a globalized economy, with a greater potential for a profitable return from the sustainable use of forest resources.

Nfps, through multistakeholder and transparent processes, are in a position to address these cross-sectoral causes and harness cooperation, donor coordination and participatory decision-making, planning and implementation for sustainable forest sector development.

Nfps embrace considerable potential for change, some of which has already materialized:

- ◆ Nfps raise the visibility, importance and acknowledgement of the forest sector by means of multisectoral and participatory processes. They help position forestry in a way that it can play a stronger role in sustainable development;
- ◆ nfps broaden the scope in the search for solutions to forestry's most pressing problems. On the other hand, they underline and operationalize the forest sector's contribution to overall sustainable development and poverty alleviation;
- ◆ by improving the framework conditions for sector governance and by operating on an intersectoral scale, nfps tackle problems of forest sector development at their roots;
- ◆ nfps make planning more realistic as they strive for demand-driven solutions and establish a financing strategy from the outset.



*Nfps should not produce additional red tape; on the contrary, they should contribute to cutting bureaucracy*

## Flashback: the road to the nfp concept

As early as the 1960s, forest sector assistance in the area of policy planning was deemed to be promising to rationalize the sector's performance and provide more strategic orientation towards forest development. In the 1980s, in response to worldwide concern over deforestation in the tropics, a first set of internationally concerted action plans was initiated (e.g. tropical forest action plans, forestry



*Nfp, a promising way to go*

sector master plans, forestry sector reviews). At the same time, countries were also approached for similar initiatives with a broader environmental scope (e.g. national conservation strategies, environmental action plans), all of which partly overlapped with the forest-specific ones. The lessons learned from TFAP (see Box) and other planning frameworks had significant impact on the subsequent international forest policy dialogue.

In 1992, the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) triggered a change in paradigm. Future forest-related programmes were to aim at the “conservation, management and sustainable development of all types of forests” worldwide. To this end, holistic, cross-sectoral approaches were favoured (United Nations, 1992).

### Early efforts in national policy frameworks: Tropical Forests Action Programme

The Tropical Forestry Action Programme (TFAP) was initiated in 1985 by the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Resources Institute and FAO. TFAP aimed to raise awareness about accelerating deforestation in the tropics and increase the status of forestry in national planning and international cooperation, harmonize administrative action, support data collection and secure sustainable funding. Respective national forestry action plans were conceived in a number of countries. The TFAP process made a good head start and in some respects paved the way for later UNCED agreements. It stimulated international support for forest-sector investments and efforts to strengthen national forest policies in tropical countries. But despite several adjustments, the process lost momentum, which was attributed to the following constraints:

- **Restricted point of view.** Although forest multifunctionality and cross-sectoral dimension were principally acknowledged, TFAP was focused on commercial forests, at the expense of other forest functions and other linkages with other sectors. In particular, conservation issues and the interests of indigenous people were not sufficiently addressed.
- **Limited agenda.** Preoccupied with ambitious planning of single, sometimes technocratic projects, many countries faced difficulties in implementation. Needs for policy and institutional reform, for establishing cross-sectoral links and for a sound financing strategy were not adequately addressed.
- **Fading sense of ownership.** At first, TFAP was felt to be too donor-driven as it sometimes favoured external instead of national leadership; later both donors and recipient countries struggled to sustain their commitments.
- **Donor-dependency.** Frequently, planning took the shape of a list of externally financed desirables, without any adequate care for national counter-financing. This resulted in donor dependency or else in unsustainability of funding.



Pluralistic partner structures in the forest sector (i.e. multiple models of ownership and management, plurality of service providers, diversity of administrative bodies, multilateral decision-making) were favoured over a concentrated hold on forest resources (e.g. centralized, heavily regulated government planning exclusively carried out by natural resources professionals or officials).

In 1995, the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF), established by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) to ensure continuity of forest policy dialogue and to develop an international consensus on national mechanisms for sustainable forest management, elaborated an agreement on a large number of forest-related issues. Within the approximately 150 Proposals for Action created by the IPF, nfps were conceived as central instruments to put the agreements into practice at the country level.



*Nfps are not just another plan,  
or a document only*

The conceptual design of nfps needed to be flexible and dynamic in order for nfps to be applicable to vastly differing political, socio-economic and ecological country contexts. At the same time, coherence of international action and lessons from previous programmes requested a definition of certain standards. Shortly before the fourth session of the IPF, when nfps were officially endorsed, FAO, supported by the International Forestry Advisors Group, consisting of forestry advisors from international, bilateral

and multilateral agencies, had already incorporated the latest international developments into practical principles and guidelines for an evolving national forest programme concept (FAO, 1996).

In 1997, the CSD established the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) as a successor to IPF. It tackled a number of unresolved questions of IPF and promoted and monitored the implementation of the IPF Proposals for Action. IFF reconfirmed that nfps, as defined by IPF, were a viable framework for implementation of the existing Proposals for Action in a holistic, comprehensive and multisectoral manner. IFF added another 120 to reach the current total of 270 IPF/IFF proposals. Some aspects received more attention than before: explicit reference to women was added and the application of, and support to, the nfp processes more specifically referred to: (i) low forest cover countries, (ii) least-developed countries, (iii) developing countries and countries, in transition as well as (iv) countries with critical ecological problems

requiring rehabilitation and sustainable management of the forest cover. In order to make full use of the Proposals for Action and the concept of nfps, the IFF recommended that countries conduct a systematic national assessment of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action involving all stakeholders and plan for their implementation within country-specific national forest programmes.

In 2000, the nfp concept moved on to the agenda of the International Arrangement on Forests – consisting of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) (2000–2005) and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests – which aims to promote the implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action through nfps. The UNFF meetings gave the opportunity to participating countries to share their experience, furnishing the necessary “translation” or guidance for operationalization of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action. To meet the demand for regular updates on lessons learned and develop the nfp concept further, support structures have emerged since the late 1990s, including the World Bank’s Program on Forests (PROFOR) and, more recently, the National Forest Programme Facility, hosted by FAO (cf. Chapter 4).

## Key characteristics of national forest programmes

- Scope** Unlike its predecessors, the nfp concept explicitly pertains to all countries and to all types of forests in tropical, subtropical and temperate areas. It reflects a global consensus on how forests ought to be managed and developed, but it is neither legally binding in itself nor embedded in any legally binding instrument.
- Objective** An nfp helps a given country approach the objective of sustainable use, conservation and development of forests – by guiding and streamlining existing activities or programmes (in the forest sector and beyond) towards this goal.
- Process orientation** An nfp is not a tangible document in the sense of a master plan, but a participatory process with defined outputs. The nfp goes far beyond a planning document only. It is an iterative, long-term process, composed of various elements, including the country policy and legal framework related to forests, the participation mechanisms, the capacity-building initiatives and others (see “Phases and related outputs”). In all its phases the nfp provides for learning cycles which allow the realities experienced along the way to be shared; and for lessons to be learned in order to fine-tune the process. The active call for feedback from stakeholders makes nfps dynamic, adaptive and negotiable.

**Comprehensiveness** The nfp does not only provide for forest policy development and planning but also for their implementation on the ground. Participatory planning is key to the process, hence links between normative planning (policy formulation), sector planning (elaboration of a strategy) and operational planning (action programmes) are fostered. They aim to promote participatory implementation where the results of agreed objectives, policies and strategies on sustainable forest management are translated into specific actions developed by the stakeholders. Joint M&E is also part of this process.



*Nfps need coordination and communication between and among government institutions, the private sector and all other stakeholders*

### **Adaptability**

#### ***Where nfps allow for leeway***

Countries will set their own national priorities (e.g. which forest functions should predominate), establish targets and timetables and determine strategies. They will choose the suitable kinds and proportions of forest ownership models, organizational structures and administrative processes (number of line agencies, budget responsibility, allocation). Even where nfps are cofinanced from outside, the control over the process rests with the country proper. The nfp concept requires a respect for plurality and subsidiarity from all participating parties and is itself obedient to these standards.

### **Democratic commitment**

#### ***Where nfps do not grant leeway***

Nfps need to be understood not as a central planning exercise but as part of decentralization and devolution efforts. Nfps are committed to democratic consultation and decision-making. They embrace societal pluralism and provide for multistakeholder participation, for building transparency, promoting consensus and clarifying stakeholders' mandates, tasks, rights and obligations. Open, transparent and inclusive (bottom-up) planning, consultation, negotiation, communication and educational processes are prerequisites, in order for the widespread aims, interests and personalities to be integrated and a common political vision established as the basis for further action. In some cases society may first have to be organized in a way that makes it possible for all interested parties to be heard.

### **Inclusiveness**

An nfp should not be regarded as an additional, parallel exercise, opposed to or competing with existing approaches to sustainable development. Instead, existing approaches can be taken as an entry point into an nfp, and themselves be integrated into the nfp process. Each country will need to find its own entry point for an nfp as based on its own set of circumstances, existing processes, institutional arrangements and capacities. Entry points may be based on a problem such as a punctual crisis (e.g. in sector finances), imminent threats (e.g. effects of deforestation), long-pending problems (e.g. sector performance gaps), or on a potential (e.g. increased contribution to national economic development and poverty alleviation, wood and energy supply, or ecological stabilization).

### **Wide reach**

The nfp concept goes beyond forest-technical matters in that it is intrinsically linked with matters of good governance. Nfps work best under decentralization, public consultation and democratic participation.

Conversely, where these are lacking, nfps may assume a pacemaker role. In this capacity nfps leave previous forest policy instruments behind and open up a new chapter in forest-sector interventions.

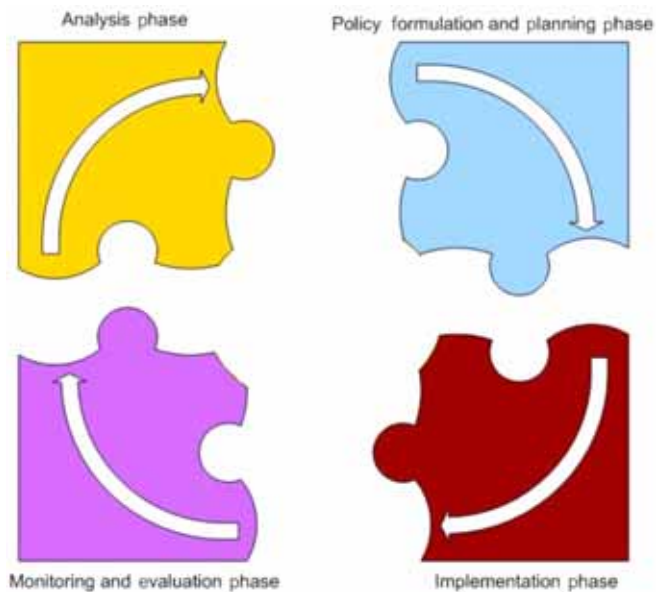
### Phases and related outputs

Nfps typically evolve in a sequence of phases that can be continuously repeated in an evolving cycle of learning and adaptation from experience (see Chapter 3).

In this publication the phases are set apart as:

- ◆ analysis;
- ◆ policy formulation and planning;
- ◆ implementation;
- ◆ monitoring and evaluation.

These phases are intended to help the nfp practitioner in mapping the nfp process of his/her country, as well as to assist in the identification of definite outputs. In most cases, these outputs form a set of so-called “elements” that constitute the nfp process. Examples of typical outputs for each phase are given opposite.



*Nfp phases*

Outputs of nfp phases	
<b>Analysis</b>	Sector review (assessment of the forest sector and its interrelations with other sectors)
<b>Policy formulation and planning</b>	<p>Platform for stakeholder dialogue and participation</p> <p>A national forest statement, detailing the political commitment to sustainable forest development as a contribution to sustainable development</p> <p>Objectives and strategies for the forest sector, including a financing strategy for sustainable forest management</p> <p>Plans for action and investment programmes for the implementation of the agreed measures, including capacity building, information and a financing strategy</p>
<b>Implementation</b>	<p>Political, legal and institutional reforms, both within and outside the forest sector</p> <p>Information and knowledge management (IKM) systems</p> <p>National and international partnership arrangements and joint activities</p>
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and evaluation reports/documentation

## Principles

As an open-ended, country-driven and adaptive process, there is no common recipe for how to develop an nfp. However, the guiding “principles” agreed upon by all countries participating in the international forest debate entail certain norms and orientation that should steer an nfp process. The principles pertain to both the content and the entire development of the nfp. As the principles form the backbone of the nfp concept and delineate the main set of guidelines to inspire the nfp practitioner in the participatory formulation, implementation and assessment of the nfp process, the following chapter will be entirely devoted to them.



## 2. Nfp principles

As stated earlier, the nfp concept includes a wide range of country-specific approaches towards sustainable forest management based on a common set of guiding principles. These “nfp principles” are endorsed by all countries participating in the IPF/IFF/UNFF to serve as an overall guidance for an nfp process. They reflect basic considerations of UNCED as expressed specifically in the Forest Principles (United Nations, 1992), as well as in most other environment-related processes (e.g. the UN conventions on biological diversity, climate change and combating desertification). Officially they were deliberated by IPF and agreed upon during its fourth session. In the respective IPF report (ECOSOC, 1997), the term “principle” was introduced and a number of issues presented in the subsequent text which can be defined as principles (cf. Box, p.14).<sup>1</sup> Many of the principles lack precise definitions and several reflect the same concept. Consequently, various publications have sought to clarify, streamline and cluster the principles in order to enhance their practical value. This publication builds on them and proposes a simplified clustering of principles to assist the nfp practitioner in the development of the process.

As different from factual objectives (which determine the output of the nfp, i.e. *what* is to be achieved), the principles indicate which aspects should be taken into account to make an nfp work in practice (*how* to conduct the process).

*Nfps must fit in with national development planning, poverty reduction strategies and macro-economic policy frameworks*



<sup>1</sup> Twelve basic principles were first mentioned in *Basic principles and operational guidelines* (FAO, 1996). Most of these principles were reiterated in the IPF report (ECOSOC, 1997).



### Points of reference to nfp "principles" – excerpts from the IPF final report

Paragraph 8:

- Broad intersectoral approach
- Implementation within a country's specific situation
- Integration into wider programmes of sustainable land use in accordance with Agenda 21
- Activities of other sectors to be taken into account

Paragraph 9:

- Appropriate participatory mechanisms in which all interested parties are involved
- Decentralization and empowerment of regional and local government structures
- Consistency with the constitutional and legal frameworks of each country
- Recognition and respect for customary and traditional rights of (*inter alia*) indigenous peoples, local communities, forest dwellers and forest owners
- Secure land and forest tenure arrangements
- Establishment of effective coordination mechanisms and conflict-resolution schemes

Paragraph 10:

- National sovereignty and country leadership
- Consistency with national policy and international commitments
- Integration with the sustainable development strategies of the country
- Partnership and participation
- Holistic and intersectoral approaches

Paragraph 11:

- Sound economic valuation of forest resources, products and services

Paragraph 12:

- Supportive economic and commercial environment (market forces)
- Market context that enhances the economic value of forest resources and a price mechanism that promotes a return for sustainable use of forest resources

Paragraph 14:

- Enhancing institutional capacity of forest-related sectors

Paragraph 15:

- Coordination among interested parties at national and international levels

Paragraph 16:

- Improving regional and international cooperation for the exchange of information, technology and know-how by networks

Paragraph 17a:

- Taking into consideration:
  - consistency with national, subnational or local policies and strategies and international agreements
  - partnership and participatory mechanisms
  - recognition of and respect for customary and traditional rights
  - secure land tenure arrangements
  - holistic, intersectoral and iterative approaches
  - ecosystem approaches
  - adequate provision and valuation of forest goods and services

Paragraph 17b:

- Improved cooperation in support of SFM

Paragraph 17c:

- International cooperation for development of nfps

Paragraph 17d:

- Integrate criteria and indicators for SFM into overall process

Paragraph 17e:

- Develop, test and implement appropriate participatory mechanisms for integrating timely and continuous multidisciplinary research into all stages of the planning cycle

Paragraph 17f:

- Participation

Paragraph 17g:

- Capacity building

Paragraph 17h:

- Coordination mechanisms, consensus building

Paragraph 17i:

- Partnership (partnership agreements)

Source: ECOSOC, 1997.

For the sake of simplicity and clarity, in this publication the principles have been aggregated into three clusters of core principles under which all original principles are logically subsumed. The core clusters are:

1. National sovereignty and country leadership
2. Consistency within and integration beyond the forest sector
3. Participation and partnership

### **Cluster 1. National sovereignty and country leadership**

The original principle of national sovereignty and country leadership in nfp formulation and implementation has remained unchanged throughout all relevant documents (Forest Principles, Agenda 21, relevant environmental agreements) and post-IPF literature. It is entirely adopted in this publication.



*Country leadership is indispensable in the analysis, strategic planning, implementation and revision of nfps*

### **Cluster 2. Consistency within and integration beyond the forest sector**

This cluster highlights the linkages within (intrasectoral) and beyond (intersectoral) the forest sector: They are vertical (representing the integration “above” into general, overarching country policy frameworks and “below” into decentralized structures) as well as horizontal (between forests and all its related partners and sectors). Official legislation and customary laws concerning general development issues as well as all relevant sectors are to be taken into account for their consistency and mutual impact on forests. Hence, this cluster combines the principles relating to other sectors or to overarching policies, e.g.:

- ◆ broad intersectoral approach;
- ◆ integration with the sustainable development strategies of the country;
- ◆ consistency with the constitutional and legal frameworks of each country;
- ◆ recognition of and respect for customary and traditional rights of (*inter alia*) indigenous peoples, local communities, forest dwellers and forest owners.

This cluster also includes the more practical intersectoral arrangements, e.g.:

- ◆ secure land and forest tenure arrangements;
- ◆ sound economic valuation of forest products (timber and non-timber forest products) and services (e.g. forests and water, forests and climate change, forests and biodiversity conservation, forests and recreation);
- ◆ supportive economic and commercial environment, i.e. a market context that enhances the economic value of the multiple products and services of forests and a price mechanism that promotes a positive return on sustainable use and conservation of forest resources;
- ◆ enhancing the institutional capacity of forest-related sectors.

### **Cluster 3. Participation and partnership**

The IPF report mentions participation and partnership both as separate entities as well as in conjunction. Partnership and participation are closely related in that they both target the utilization of broad expertise and resources and an equitable sharing of workload, responsibilities and ownership.

This cluster includes the following principles:

- ◆ partnership and participation;
- ◆ coordination among all interested parties;
- ◆ appropriate participatory mechanisms in which all interested parties are involved;
- ◆ establishment of effective coordination mechanisms and conflict-resolution schemes;
- ◆ improving regional and international cooperation for the exchange of information, technology and expertise by networks.



*Clusters of nfp principles*

In the following sections, the principles will be discussed in close detail – in relation to: their specific meaning and significance; practical requirements; and indicators of progress in their implementation. Of course, the three clusters of principles are closely related and will in practice be implemented in an integrated way. This is why Chapter 3 will illustrate how to apply the principles jointly, in the various phases of an nfp process – with respect to related activities and outputs.

## National sovereignty and country leadership

### Definition and significance

One common definition of national sovereignty refers to a state's authority to govern itself. Accordingly, in the nfp context national sovereignty means that nation states have an acknowledged right to manage and use the forests within their boundaries in accordance with their own environmental policies and development needs.

However, at UNCED an international agreement, even if not legally binding, on the scope of this right was reached: Since all states' share responsibility for global resources, the use of forest resources is to be based on sustainability and without doing harm to other states or jeopardizing the common heritage of humankind and the development option of future generations.

Country leadership denotes that the country assumes full responsibility for preparation and implementation of an nfp. Country leadership must not be mistaken for exclusive government leadership. Appropriate country leadership means to enable, invite and facilitate multistakeholder participation. It is also important to note that country leadership does not only apply to the national level but also to the subregional and local levels.



*Country leadership and enhanced coordination between stakeholders are imperative*

Many past forest-related programmes and initiatives turned out to be too donor-driven and top-down (in terms of being controlled by national authorities as the donors' sole partners). The nfp concept, although not entirely free from such criticism, offers a solid basis for national sovereignty and country leadership in a better balance of stakeholder interests, for several reasons. The concept has emanated from a multilateral negotiation process, in which developing countries, countries in transition and developed countries had an equal voice. This principle of open, equitable dialogue is also expected to be replicated at the various country levels. Also, the principle of cofinancing by the countries themselves, and the development of domestic-based financing strategies, has become a supporting factor for country leadership in terms of enhanced ownership in a more scrupulous set of investments and disbursement of funds, as well as careful monitoring and evaluation.

Country leadership and sovereignty invariably necessitate national ownership, a firm commitment and a strong political will by decision-makers with respect to sustainable forest development. It is evident that the greater the sector's economic and political weight, the higher the political attention and commitment will be. On the other hand, the economic and political weight of the forest sector will increase in line with the capability to illustrate the importance of the sector for overall development, and when the economic valuation of its functions and services is visible and endorsed.

### How to proceed and what precautions to take

To raise the forest sector's profile, it is important to demonstrate the contribution of forestry to development and poverty alleviation in general, and more specifically to the gross domestic product (GDP) and other macro-economic indicators. Valuation and accounting of forest products and services, including indirect benefits of sustainable forest management, are an effective means to this end. No common methodology for valuation of all forest benefits (including forest services) exists at present and more research is still needed. However, informed estimation with approximate results may serve the purpose. With these results in hand, the next step to raise the sector's profile is information, communication and lobbying on the value and importance of forests at all levels (international, national, subnational, local).

Political will and commitment are also largely influenced by public opinion. If strong movements and pressure groups for forests are active, they may be capable of influencing policy decisions. Media play a crucial role in this respect. Transparency of the nfp process and the roles and responsibilities of its advocates will ensure its legitimacy – another precondition for a positive image of the forest sector.

## Country case: Uganda - mandates and roles of different nfp fora

In Uganda the nfp process was supported by the Forest Sector Umbrella Program), a holistic multidonor programme which ran from 1998 to 2004. Following the principles of the nfp concept, multistakeholder participation and intersectoral negotiation were provided for.

The following institutions and fora were installed:

- In the **Uganda Forestry Sector Coordination Committee** (FSCC) representatives of ministries (agriculture, tourism, local government, public service, finance, energy, education), of the private sector (plantations and saw milling) and civil society (NGOs), convened under the coordination of the Ministry of Water, Land and Environment. Their task was to levy propositions for sector reform up to the political level of the respective ministries. The FSCC was very much nationally driven; it held meetings every three to six months until the policy was formulated and the reforms were started.
- The **Uganda Forestry Sector Coordination Secretariat** prepared the key issues to be presented to the FSCC (in terms of data collection, timing and scope) and regularly submitted reports to the committee. The secretariat held numerous consultation events and workshops to seek input for drafting policy documents, share progress and to enable broad participation in the reform process.
- The **Consultative Conference on Uganda's Forests**, a large forum to which all important stakeholders were invited, was supposed to meet once a year. This ambitious plan turned out to be unrealistic: The conference was limited to two meetings, in 1997 and 2002.
- For six thematic areas, **working groups** (National Forestry Authority, Policy Legislation and Institutions, Gender and Equity, Forestry in Government Reserves, Forestry in Private and Customary Lands and Promoting Forest Industries) were mandated by the FSCC. Membership of the working groups was based on professional expertise and open to all segments of society (government, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and private business). Working documents and issues papers were commissioned or drafted by secretariat staff and shaped by the working groups.
- The **Uganda Forestry Working Group**, a network of civil society organizations, research and academic institutions and individuals, convened its members and discussed the draft Policy, Act and Regulations. Comments generated were submitted as memoranda to the forestry sector coordination secretariat for consideration in the finalization of the Policy, Act and NFP.
- To improve donor coordination, a specific **Donor Coordination Group** was established. Donors (e.g. United Kingdom, Norway, Germany, UNDP) and Ugandan agencies contributed to the secretariat and to certain elements of the Forest Sector Umbrella Program.

This created the basis for a new Uganda Forestry Policy, a National Forest Plan, a National Forestry Authority Business plan and a Forestry Act.

### Lessons learned and perspectives

Intersectoral participation and forceful public relations campaigns right from the beginning of the process turned out to be fundamental for demand-driven and adapted legislative reform. One of the major challenges that still limit the success of the Forest Sector Umbrella Program is the strong dependency on donor assistance in terms of financing. Instead, government, the private economy and donors should share the costs of programme fora and implementation.

Suitable arrangements to negotiate nfp issues are at the core of the nfp process, since these arrangements enable national sovereignty and ownership to be embedded in the process. Such arrangements can consist of a national stakeholder forum (as a national platform for political discourse and consensus building), or a steering committee or a board, on which all key stakeholder groups are represented, with a mandate to oversee and lead the nfp process. A permanent secretariat and information clearinghouse with the task of catering to the various informational and organizational needs will also prove essential. Whenever possible, an nfp Web page on the Internet will facilitate locating information about the country process and its arrangements for dialogue and participation. These arrangements represent important elements of the nfp process.

In order to assume leadership of an nfp in a meaningful and efficient way, national and subnational institutions (including non-governmental stakeholders) may need capacity building at the outset. A number of organizations provide support in this area – e.g. public and private extension centres at the district, national, regional and international levels (cf. Chapter 4).

Donors have many ways to adopt a supporting, facilitating role in a country-led process. Sustaining a strategic dialogue with the partner government and other stakeholders, supporting enabling framework conditions and building alliances for sustainable forest-sector development are among the central options for support. While financial contributions from donors are sometimes needed to initiate the nfp and implement some of the nfp actions, overdependence has proved to have a negative impact on national ownership and commitment. Suitable exit scenarios should be conceived by the parties involved.

Donor coordination under national leadership will enable demand-oriented, targeted and synergetic interventions and effective use of ODA to occur. The shift of paradigm which is inherent in the nfp concept (from donors and governments exercising full control, to fostering partnerships) will also need to take place in the field. Stakeholders must consciously be supported and encouraged to speak up and get involved.

### **How to measure progress**

Country leadership, political will and national commitment can only be assessed in practice by considering a number of (proxy) indicators at the same time. The existence of a publicly well-known, officially adopted and broadly accepted policy statement on forests, wildlife and protected areas is certainly an important milestone. Another indicator of the sector's profile is how it is presented in the media.

A systematic assessment of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, in order to prioritize and systematically monitor their implementation according to country needs, would equally show a strong and serious commitment to sustainable forest management. The importance attributed to forest issues and the capacity



for coordination and leadership can be also measured by the existence of an appropriate institutional framework under the auspices of national institutions. Interministerial or interinstitutional coordination mechanisms and procedures are also indicative of forest-sector importance in the country political scenario. The existence (or absence) of provisions for capacity building for the different stakeholders in these structures provides some hints as to the importance attributed to their participation and integration. Another strong indicator of country ownership and leadership can also be the country's own human resources and budget allocation to the forest sector and sustainable forest management.

In countries receiving donor support, the quality and effectiveness of donor coordination under the leadership of a national institution as well as the degree to which roles and mandates of the different donors have been defined may provide a basis for assessment of country leadership.

Last but not least, the representation and quality of countries' contributions to international fora and seminars are signs of commitment and sovereignty.

## Consistency within and integration beyond the forest sector

### Definition and significance

To seek consistency within the forest sector (intrasectoral) means to ensure coherence among the economic, environmental and social objectives and roles assigned to forest in a country. Under a holistic approach, consistency also means fostering synergies with all stakeholders and partners, to minimize contradictions and negative impacts from one stakeholder's action to another. Consistency, finally, relates to laws and legal prescriptions, to strategies, and to practical implementation measures.

#### An example of inconsistency

If royalties are set at a very low level, trees are treated as an inferior resource. This is incompatible with the objective that the forest sector should contribute significantly to the GDP. Furthermore, exceptionally low pricing of produce from state forests distorts the market for forest products and may put private forest enterprises at a disadvantage.

Consistency is facilitated if the forest sector is oriented towards clear, well-defined and consensual objectives that guide the nfp.

Respect for consistency will further imply recognition of customary laws and traditional rights, as well as traditional forest-related knowledge as legitimate determinants of forest-sector development.

While in some countries customary laws and traditional rights may be explicitly acknowledged as part of the respective national legal systems, this issue may still be the subject of discussion in others. In any case, customary laws and traditional rights remain immediately relevant to the process: first, because they effectively determine the actions of the rural population in many countries; second, because they reflect long-established access, management and use patterns, practices and modalities; and, third, because they are inseparably linked with rural development, livelihoods and poverty alleviation. Traditional

forest-related knowledge in many cases forms an essential basis for sustainable management of forests or the appropriate and effective use of forest products.

Integration beyond the sector (intersectoral) relates to: (i) sector-overarching policies and strategies, e.g. sustainable development and poverty reduction (vertical integration); and (ii) coordination with other sectors (horizontal coordination). It is justified by the fact that, on the one hand, forests serve various functions and provide goods and services beyond the forest sector and, on the other hand, are significantly impacted by other sectors.

### ***Sector-overarching policies***

Forest-sector development has to be considered comprehensively and coherently within the overall context of sustainable development. It should contribute to and – at the same time – is dependent on sustainable development in a general sense, and more specifically on sustainable rural development. As yet, the potential of forestry in development is grossly underestimated in many countries. To rectify this situation, forestry needs to be made part of wider national development frameworks such as poverty reduction strategies and sustainable development strategies.

Approaches that are cross-cutting and integrative also serve to increase coherence between forest-sector development and a country's international commitments and obligations. In many countries there are a number of ongoing parallel international processes, e.g. related to the implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements, such as the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Forests play an important role in all of them, and often the same forest-related measure contributes to the objectives of several multilateral environmental agreements. Avoiding duplication of efforts in planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting, and creating synergies will increase the impact and reduce the workload of the management of all processes. Harmonizing forest planning strategies with the strategies and action plans developed by the agreements of which the country is signatory is an excellent starting point.

### **Country case: Germany – integration of nfp into sustainable development**

In Germany the nfp process is conducted in several phases. The main formulation phases took place in 1999–2000 and 2001–2003. Since 2004 implementation has been ongoing, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the agreed procedures and actions. One big issue within this process is the integration of the nfp into the national Strategy for Sustainable Development to send a clear message and solicit support by all stakeholders to national authorities and the forest-related sectors. To this end, formulation of the strategy was initiated by the key actors of the nfp process, one of whom is a member of the German Council for Sustainable Development. The council recommended that the government designate forests as a key factor in the strategy and proposed several forest-related pilot projects.

### ***Unintended and unexpected impacts from improved water supply***



*Scarcity of water – careful utilization – limiting the number of animals – ecological equilibrium*



*Better water supply – wasteful utilization – increased number of animals (above the carrying capacity) – need for more fodder – forest degradation*

### ***Coordination with other sectors***

Many factors that contribute to forest degradation and deforestation originate outside the forest sector, such as conversion of forests into farmland or settlements, overgrazing or unchecked wildfires, infrastructure development (road construction, dams, canals, etc.) and mining. On the other hand, a number of other sectors (e.g. agriculture, water) depend on the functions (goods and services) provided by forests. While, in many instances, the stability of their long-term production relies on forests, they often contribute unintentionally to forest degradation and deforestation and to the subsequent need for investment in rehabilitation. Therefore, it is emphasized that these sectors must share the responsibility for investing in the sustainable management of forests and for mitigating their own impact on forests.

Integration of forestry into key umbrella frameworks (poverty reduction strategies and the like) also facilitates intersectoral coordination and cooperation as all sectors pursue the same objectives.

### **How to proceed and what precautions to take**

To promote consistency within and integration beyond the forest sector, existing regulations, traditional rights and practical implementation measures should be carefully analysed. If needed, respective modifications/adaptations have to be made, searching for consensus, minimization of impacts and compensation. A win-win situation can be sought by identifying traditional forest-related knowledge and negotiating on related use rights and interests.

Thorough knowledge and analysis are needed, about current and potential roles of forests, stakeholder perspectives and expectations, as well as other sectors' development strategies and their impact on forests. There is also a need to identify and select approaches for intra- and intersectoral dialogue and consensus building, as well as to take proactive actions towards them. Some suggestions are provided below.

### *Analysing the perspectives of forest stakeholders and sectors related to forests*

- ◆ **An information base is needed** to assess positive as well as negative effects of cross-cutting linkages within the sector, between forest and other sectors as well as with overarching policy processes. It is useful to identify all stakeholders, sectors and overarching policies that have an impact on forests or are impacted by forestry, and to know their respective strategies, priorities, expectations, institutional framework and political leverage.
- ◆ **A functional analysis of the roles of forest resources** for all forest stakeholders, for other sectors, and in the overarching policy goals will help to address them in the nfp process. The balance of economic, environmental and social roles will vary considerably between countries, e.g. the role of forest management for the water sector might be different in a dryland country and in a country with abundant rainfall and water resources.
- ◆ **Qualitative assessments** (such as participatory rural appraisals) at the local level help understand the rural population's livelihood conditions and the role forest products and services play in livelihood sustenance. People's personal attitudes towards forest resources should also be assessed. Wherever forest dwellers or fringe communities engage in commercial operations, the forest products involved and their respective prices, transport distances and marketing mechanisms need to be assessed in order to estimate their contributions to income generation and to equitable share of benefits.
- ◆ **The compilation and analysis of laws and regulations** of the identified sectors can help to determine supporting roles as well as potential deficits and incompatibilities with the overall goal of sustainable development. This should be undertaken as early as possible in the development of the nfp process.

### *Approaching intra- and intersectoral linkages*

- ◆ **Intra- and intersectoral coordination** is a requirement to minimize redundancy and incoherence (different or conflicting goals and requirements) and to eliminate pending issues ("policy gaps") as far as possible. Sectoral and macro-economic policies which regulate and influence the relationship between forests, other sectors and general development frameworks need to be streamlined.
- ◆ **Capturing the interest of all actors** (e.g. private sector, local communities, NGOs, investors, youth, etc.) and forest-related sectors often proves to be a challenge. Civil society and people from other sectors will become actively involved in the nfp process only if they understand the importance of forestry for their own interest.
- ◆ **Applying integrative ecosystem and landscape approaches** can most commonly achieve a better involvement of related sectors in

deliberations. This means that a specific site will be perceived in the totality of its functions as they relate to the landscape or ecosystem. Including tree resources outside permanent forest areas that form part of the agricultural or animal husbandry system is another way to forward an integrated approach to the scope of the nfp.

- ◆ In general, the implementation of cross-sectoral approaches is facilitated where **administrative decentralization** has been enforced and district administration is responsible for all sectors. The challenge for forestry is to assert its relevance in competition with other sectors and to integrate national forest priorities into district development planning. Conflicts, particularly about budget allocations at the district level, may arise between sectors. Cooperation between sectors at the decentralized level is often hampered by lack of capacities and inadequate structures, including dual accountability of district forest officers to line ministries and district councils.
- ◆ **Diagnostic tools and methodologies** may need to be developed to assess intrasectoral and intersectoral issues. Specific information programmes may be needed to place forest issues on the agenda of related sector programmes and to create awareness of their relevance. Involvement of research and science may provide support in this respect.

*Some actions to build consistency within and integration beyond the forest sector*

- ◆ **A joint multidisciplinary effort** should start early in the nfp process, aiming at intra- and intersectoral coordination. Practical coordination should rest with an institutional focal point that has credibility, conceptual and operational capacity and convening power to guide (not steer) and moderate the process. The focal point should be accepted by most stakeholders and representatives of the other sectors. National coordination mechanisms such as a national forest forum and high-level interministerial coordinating bodies are necessary to bring proposals to a high political decision-making level.
- ◆ **The establishment of natural resource management committees or development committees** at the local level could be a useful way to bring together productive sectors (wildlife, fisheries, agriculture, forest) and promote intersectoral coordination. Cross-sectoral partnerships among producers, users, service providers and enabling agencies should also be facilitated.
- ◆ **Capacity building**, e.g. among district and local government personnel for interdisciplinary planning skills, can facilitate intersectoral coordination.
- ◆ **Adequate information exchange** among stakeholders, as well as between forestry and other sectors, is of utmost importance. To this end there is a need for well-structured, transparent and accessible information and databases about the role of forests in the national

economy, the linkages of forests with the central issues in related strategies (e.g. agriculture, environment, mining), as well as about intra- and intersectoral dependencies and impacts.

- ◆ **Multisectoral financing strategies** for implementation of nfp activities can be conceived once the role of the forest sector in other sectors is well defined and accepted. Such strategies include transfer payments from the benefiting to the providing sector (e.g. through payment for environmental services). To this end, it will be necessary to demonstrate very clearly to other sectors and the general public how entire societies benefit from forest-sector development, and why financial transfers to the forest sector are justified on the grounds of its positive impact and comparatively high rates of return.

### How to measure progress

A set of indicators can facilitate measuring nfp progress towards the forest sector's consistency and its integration with other sectors, especially when clearly indicating the accomplishments and trends at the intra- and intersectoral levels, as well as in the overarching country development policies and processes.

This measurement can take into account, among other factors:

- ◆ the recognition of forest functions and their contribution (economic, environmental and social) in the overarching national development policies, processes and strategies (e.g. in poverty reduction strategies);
- ◆ the acknowledgement and promotion of opportunities offered by the forests at different levels (e.g. in regional, national and local or district development plans);
- ◆ findings about legal inconsistencies and policy gaps (within and outside the sector), and measures/arrangements taken for their removal;
- ◆ the institutional set-up, hierarchical insertion and performance towards sustainable forest management;
- ◆ the existence and application of financial/fiscal policies and mechanisms contributing to sustainable forest management;
- ◆ the number and impact of joint forest stakeholder activities (e.g. private–public partnerships);
- ◆ the recognition and support of the national forest policy in the action plans of multilateral environmental agreements of which the country is signatory (e.g. in the National Biodiversity Strategy) and vice versa;
- ◆ trends in the share of the forest sector in the country economy, taking into account the multiple benefits of forest products and services;
- ◆ degree of representation and active participation of stakeholder groups and other sectors in forest coordination mechanisms.

Participation of stakeholders from other sectors in nfp fora can be assessed in terms of the frequency of their participation in nfp meetings, the level and representative capacity of the participants and their knowledge of forest-related

issue. The same holds true for participation of forest-sector representatives in fora of other sectors and of overarching, macro-level policy and planning frameworks such as poverty reduction strategies.

Further indications are functioning information and knowledge management mechanisms, which facilitate information exchange between stakeholders and sectors on policies, strategies and priorities.

Since in many cases sustainable forest-sector development requires substantial investment, effective financing mechanisms (including transfer of funds from other sectors and from budgets of macro-level frameworks) are important indicators of successful coordination with other sectors.

## Participation and partnership

### Definition and significance

Participation is a process whereby stakeholders (i.e. concerned individuals, groups and organizations – see Box) are consulted about, and become actively involved, in a project or programme. However, to participate in an nfp requires a certain degree of organization and capacity. This is why practical participation is mostly in the hands of organized interest groups.

#### Stakeholders

A “stakeholder” is any individual, social group, or institution that has a stake (i.e. an interest or influence) in the forest sector. Stakeholders include the forest administration, forest owners, forest user groups, local communities, the private sector, and civil and government agencies outside the forest administration who have a stake in forestry and development partners. Stakeholders may be affected directly or indirectly by the nfp process, in positive or negative ways. The nfp includes those who can and would like to influence the process.

The current concept recognizes that forests are vital not only for their owners, professional foresters or public administrators in the forest sector, but also for a broad range of groups/individuals and for society as a whole. Therefore, stakeholders in forestry are all those who depend on, or benefit from, the use of forest resources, or who decide on, control or regulate access to forest.

The call for participation is not to suggest that every single one should be involved in every discussion – much less every decision that needs to be taken. Depending on the circumstances (e.g. the degree of social and political pluralism that is

permissible in a given country as well as the issue to be tackled), participation may take many different forms. Stakeholders may participate in an nfp in various ways: either directly, or indirectly, actively or passively, in supporting or opposing roles. They may be involved in forest management either as labourers, as acknowledged users of defined forest products, as managers or as forest owners.

Stakeholder participation in an nfp is never free of conflict and dispute. However, it helps the various parties to define and voice their interests, and better understand their competitors and opponents.

It is important to understand that interest groups exist regardless of whether they are formally organized and acknowledged; and that conflicts between them linger, regardless of whether stakeholder participation is encouraged or not. Without equitable participation, competition over scarce resources may even turn destructive – through overexploitation, illegal logging and timber smuggling, unchecked conversion of forests and the like. As a general rule, participation helps ensure that decisions are taken in a transparent manner and are carried forward by all stakeholders. Competition between stakeholders can be rationalized through negotiation and consensus building.

In a strictly political sense, participation serves to enforce democratic standards and to legitimize decisions. In this regard it is an objective in itself. In a more practical sense, participation can also be a means to an end, e.g. to advance specific goals such as poverty alleviation through sustainable forest management, or protection of forests against illegal or unsustainable exploitation.



*Different stakeholders*



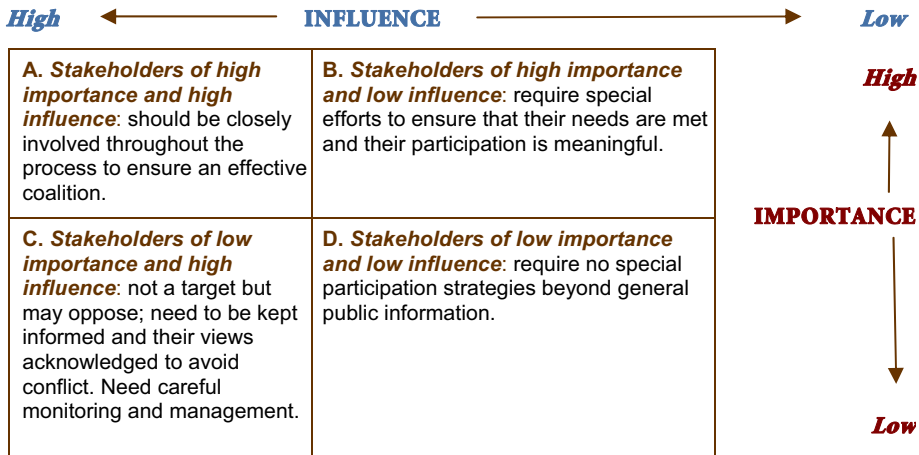
Partnership, in the nfp context, means bringing stakeholders together to implement joint activities. Partners may cooperate to develop strategies or projects, implement measures (e.g. forest management), or conduct monitoring and evaluation activities. Partnerships may exist at regional level (see Chapter 4), the national level (ministries, government agencies, donors, NGOs, private sector, lobby groups), the decentralized level (regional authorities, forest and other sector agencies, projects, NGOs, lobby groups, private sector) and the local level (local authorities, forest and other sector agencies, forest owners, traditional communities, NGOs, community-based organizations, the private sector, state enterprises).

### How to proceed and what precautions to take

A first step is to identify stakeholders and their relationships. An initial register of the most important and most obvious stakeholders might be obtained from conventional sources, such as the forest administration. However, it is often difficult to catalogue accurately all the people and organizations that are important and have an impact on the process. Depending on the degree of organization and individual capacities, one sometimes runs the risk of missing out even important (“key”) stakeholders. Disseminating information and public announcements for participation in the nfp process, and asking interested parties to come forward on their own initiative helps to overcome this difficulty, as does having known stakeholders identify others who should be involved in the nfp. To ensure equitable participation for all stakeholders according to their relative significance for the nfp, it is useful to categorize stakeholders, according to different parameters (e.g. direct versus indirect participation, powerful versus weak, national versus international). The next steps are to determine/analyse stakeholders’ influence and importance in the process, and identify the adequate level of participation and accompanying measures to involve them (see matrix opposite).

Special attention needs to be paid to those stakeholders who – despite being directly affected or otherwise important – lack the capacity to express their views and defend their interests in the political arena. Often they require specific capacity building prior to becoming fully involved in the nfp. This paves the way for the empowerment and subsequent participation of a broad scope of non-governmental stakeholders.

Another key for participation is adequate and adapted information by and for stakeholders. This may include disseminating information on specific issues in an appropriate language through suitable media. The same issue may be presented in a different way or with a different focus.



Identifying the influence and importance of forest stakeholder groups

Sometimes, political as well as legal framework conditions limit opportunities for participation, as does availability of resources. In some countries, those political and economic framework conditions need to be improved first, before stakeholder participation becomes a realistic option. To pave the way for participation, reforms such as decentralization and empowerment of regional and local government structures are important prerequisites, and in themselves are very challenging and time-consuming. In order to fulfil their mandates respective capacity building might be necessary.

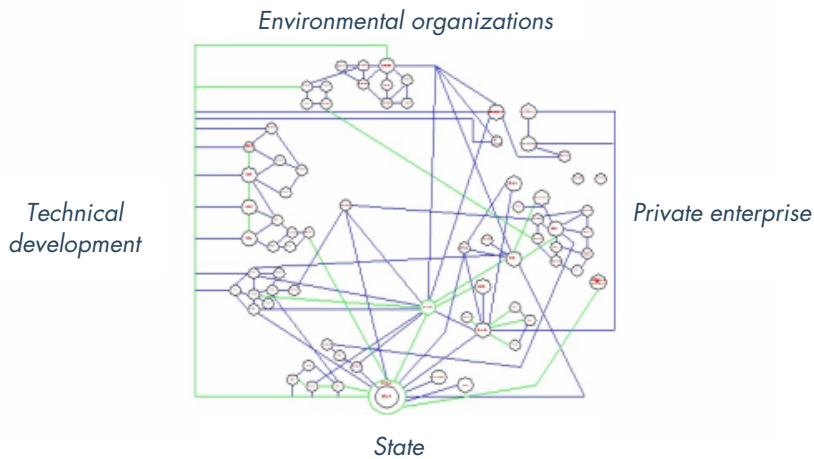
Donor support (for improved information, coordination, networking, capacity building and technology transfer) may prove particularly helpful in this respect. However, existing participatory mechanisms should be used as far as possible and the creation of parallel mechanisms or structures should be avoided.

Negotiation between stakeholders usually requires a structured process characterized by an institutional setting and appropriate mechanisms. Public fora, multistakeholder round tables, working groups, task forces or even public debates in parliament have proved to be viable means to this end.

In order to create impact on the ground, participatory planning has to be transferred to combined action. In this sense, partnerships can take the form of long-term agreements whereby stakeholders commit themselves to rules of procedure and interaction (e.g. a “code of conduct”) based upon the nfp principles. These agreements can be a voluntary expression of intent, but can also be of a more binding nature (e.g. memorandum of agreement). The strength of partnerships will depend on how well they are tailored to the specific capacities of individual partners.

### Forest sector stakeholder map – Costa Rica

A stakeholder map is a useful tool for identifying stakeholders and their structural and economic links, and also reveals the nodes where they intersect or cluster, the cardinal points representing major concerns, the relative importance of stakeholders, and their interest to act in a participatory process. The map – drawn up for the National Forest Development Plan in Costa Rica (2004) – illustrates the complexity of the forestry sector, which is much more than the simple business of producing and industrializing wood. Other stakeholders include the tourist industry, forest owners, tree nurseries, light and water companies, environmental organizations, biodiversity specialists, indigenous people, a range of ministerial institutions, farmers’ organizations, universities and professional foresters.



The consultative process for defining this map called on existing stakeholders to first join into focus groups made up of the most relevant “interested parties” in terms of importance, interest and scope. The next step was to reach consensus on a shared vision within which each stakeholder contributed his or her own special views about forests.

### Country case: Viet Nam – partnership in the nfp process

The importance of long-term partnership and cooperation of the national and international donor community for an nfp process can be demonstrated in Viet Nam.

In order to respond to the importance of forestry for the economy, but also massive, long-term deforestation and the consequences involved (e.g. soil erosion, flooding, lack of water and insecurity of food supply), Viet Nam's major programme in the forest sector, the Five Million Hectare Reforestation Programme, was launched for "regreening the barren hills" until 2010. The international donor community has supported the programme within the framework of the Forest Sector Support Programme since 2001 (FSSP). More than 20 donors and NGOs have joined a partnership approach together with the Vietnamese Government and established the sector-wide approach to support the national forest programme. The donor community and Vietnamese Government agreed to establish a partnership, with the following main features:

- integration of all major stakeholders in Viet Nam's forest sector (including involvement of local people in forest management and benefit-sharing);
- a common work plan;
- a forest-sector manual outlining quality standards;
- a joint monitoring and evaluation system;
- a multidonor fund for forests to consolidate future donor commitments to the sector.

The FSSP is organized in nine action fields, which are supported by the donors. The coordination and control of the national and donor-financed contributions are carried out by the FSSP Partnership Group and a technical committee.

The partnership approach between the government and the donor has strengthened the involvement of local people and achieved mobilization of all forces. More than just a source of funding, the donor community presents a dialogue partner that provides moral support and encourages the government to continue on the nfp path. The promotion of the nfp concept has contributed considerably to improving the convergence of government and donor funding for achieving a common goal.

Effective participation depends on adequate representation. It is therefore particularly important for stakeholders to organize themselves (and to attain a certain degree of “lobbyist professionalism”) in order to make their voice heard, solicit technical expertise and access/use information and means of communication in the most effective manner. It is imperative that stakeholder representatives reflect their respective organization’s views accurately, so as to ensure credibility and legitimacy of their actions.

## How to measure progress

Measuring progress and gauging success seem particularly difficult in the case of stakeholder participation. This is because the parameters for determining whether participation is “good” or “successful” are mostly qualitative. A large number of stakeholders present at meetings and in working groups tells little about whether the “right” participants are actively involved to an adequate degree and with desirable impact. Thus, what is needed is a set of factors by which to gauge the “quality” of participation in the context.

### Levels of participation

- Information-giving underpins all other levels of participation, and may be appropriate on its own in some circumstances. However, you are likely to hit problems if all you offer is information and people are expecting more involvement.
- Consultation is appropriate when you can offer people some choices on what you are going to do – but not the opportunity to develop their own ideas or participate in putting plans into action.
- Deciding together is a difficult stance because it can mean giving people the power to choose without fully sharing the responsibility for carrying decisions through.
- Acting together may involve short-term collaboration or forming more permanent partnerships with other interests.

One factor may be the degree of stakeholder organization in the nfp process as a sign of empowerment and enhanced use of stakeholder potential. The continuity of attendance and participation of stakeholders, e.g. the same individual is present throughout the process, is equally a good indicator to measure interest in and ownership of the process .

Growing capacity levels among stakeholders, growing political consciousness and interest, and active involvement of stakeholders at various levels bear witness to the success of the participatory approach. Widespread knowledge of policy and legislation (and other main issues in the forest sector) may be considered both a prerequisite to and a result of meaningful stakeholder participation.

Another factor to measure progress in participation may be the degree (and stability) of consensus reached through stakeholder consultations. It is relatively simple to record and follow up on those issues on which consensus is reached, and those topics that are contentious. Analysing *why* may prove more difficult – however, it promises

many insights in terms of how policy formulation may be facilitated and improved.

Increased stakeholder participation should lead to more partnerships. The latter are important mostly in the implementation phase of the process. Indicators should be used to measure the effectiveness of both stakeholder participation and the development of partnerships for nfp implementation.

As mentioned before, the nfp principles are closely related. Stakeholder participation, for instance, helps build a multifaceted and convincing argument for consistency within the forest sector. As such, participation and partnerships are instrumental for ensuring an adequate consideration of forest conservation and sustainable forest use in the political process of a country. In turn, if an nfp succeeds in raising the forest sector's profile and winning support in national politics (which is another precondition for sovereignty and country leadership), this is a strong indication of participation well done.



### 3. Applying the nfp principles in the different phases of the process

This chapter provides some more operational hints about how the principles can be applied in practice. It highlights possible activities and outputs and gives some options on tools and instruments, which, in the different phases of an nfp process, help to apply the principles. The activities described do not refer separately to single principles but often address several or all of them. They should not be understood as a straitjacket but as a set of supportive tools that can be enlarged and improved by the nfp practitioners' own experience.

As stated in Chapter 1, an nfp entails a cyclical process with a sequence of activities that gradually evolve and allow for action learning. These are broadly known as policy cycles, which develop and start again as lessons are learned. Hence, learning takes place and leads to increased quality and impact with every round of this iterative process.

Different ways of clustering the nfp phases are conceivable (see illustration below).

For the purpose of the present publication the process is split into four phases: analysis, policy formulation and strategic planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. These four phases are closely related and interconnected. They should not be seen in a straight chronological order as in reality they exist in parallel. While, for example, in some fields of activity analysis may just start, in others implementation is already in progress.





### Alternative models of nfp phases

In its *Basic principles and operational guidelines* (FAO, 1996), FAO distinguishes four phases: organization of the process, strategic sector planning, programme implementation, and revision and updating. In this model, organization of the process has been attributed a phase of its own, and analysis is regarded as part of the planning phase.

Another model which was elaborated by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the International Forest Policy project (IWP) sets out the following phases and results: analysis (knowledge), negotiation (consensus), decision-making (policy) and action (implementation). In this model, monitoring and evaluation is tacitly considered an integral part of the action stage, whereas the two conceptual stages (negotiation and decision-making) may also be summarily called “(strategic) planning”.

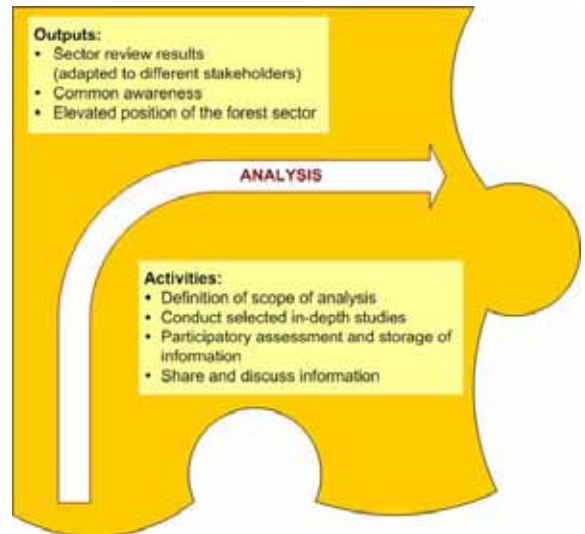
When starting an nfp (no matter from which entry point and which phase), a preparatory phase may be included in which organizational measures have to be conducted to set up the structure and the participatory mechanisms for the process, such as the steering committee, working groups, secretariat, focal point institution, etc.

During the whole process and in all phases, communication, coordination and capacity building are key to success (cf. illustration above).

## Analysis

The analysis phase comprises the identification of problems and risks, but also of opportunities and challenges (SWOT<sup>2</sup> analysis). This phase is decisive for the forthcoming nfp process: If, for instance, cross-sectoral relations fail to be worked out in the sector analysis, it will be very difficult to include them adequately in the planning and implementation phase.

The analysis phase is in itself an iterative process. Starting with existing documents, the quality and the quantity of information have to be assessed and information gaps identified and closed. Results of a preliminary analysis need to be fed back to relevant stakeholders and amended if necessary.



<sup>2</sup> Short for “strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats” – a commonly used, standardized analysis tool.

Sufficient data may not immediately be available to answer all important questions (e.g. adequate valuation of forest services). The stepwise integration of data yet to be collected in an effective M&E system will improve this situation in the long term. As early as in this phase, forest stakeholders and representatives of other sectors need to participate actively in the analysis – for country ownership to develop and to achieve a common understanding of problems, challenges and opportunities. The analysis forms the basis for jointly establishing any forest-related objectives. An advantage of contributions to the analysis from different stakeholders is that the process will benefit from a variety of expertise and points of view. However, identifying the manifold sources of relevant knowledge and making them productive for the process is no minor challenge.

There is an apparent difference with respect to previous planning frameworks: It is not requested that, at the very beginning of the process, large amounts of highly detailed data be collected by external experts as a precondition to start planning and implementation. Instead, action can already be taken on the basis of existing information. In the analysis phase, the specific information needs are identified and gradually supplied by specific studies and surveys. Hence, in the course of this iterative (learning) process, knowledge will increase for all stakeholders, allowing for policies, measures and plans to be gradually added and adjusted.

In this phase much communication and coordination input is required: Inputs to the analysis need to be collected from different sources and stakeholders, and results disseminated and discussed. When this takes place over and over again at different levels, it also contributes to capacity building.

### **Activities**

In this phase, first, it is necessary to become aware of and reach consensus about what needs to be analysed (scope of the analysis). Adequate diagnostic tools need to be applied to understand and highlight key issues, e.g. the importance of forests for poverty reduction.

In order to assess overarching development goals for integration of the nfp, broader policies and development strategies (e.g. poverty reduction strategies) and their relation to forests and the forest sector should be analysed.

Intersectoral linkages is an equally important issue (see Box, p.40). Linkages include the dependence of rural communities or forest dwellers on forests for their livelihoods, income-generation opportunities and contribution of the forest sector to the GDP.

### **Selected issues to be analysed in order to explore intersectoral linkages**

- Policies and activities of other relevant sectors;
- institutional setting (including other sectors);
- identification and valuation of the multiple functions of forests (forest accounting systems);
- dependence of other sectors on forest goods and services;
- contributions of forest goods and services to the objectives of other sectors;
- impact of non-forestry policies on forests and vice versa;
- importance of forest resources for food security, satisfying energy needs, etc.;
- communication/coordination mechanisms between relevant sectors.

### **Stakeholder database checklist**

The database could include the following attributes:

- information on all stakeholders including addresses, contact persons, organizations they represent and how critical their involvement is for successful stakeholder consultation and active participation;
- appropriate communication vehicles for the stakeholders, such as newsletters, pamphlets, technical bulletins, posters and presentation materials;
- information on issues/concerns raised, when, by whom and who is responsible for addressing the issue/concern;
- a set of criteria for considering the comments and tackling conflict resolution matters.

Sound information on “classic” forest issues (e.g. forest area, deforestation rates, causes and impacts, production of timber and other forest goods, age classes, distribution of species) are prerequisites for forest management planning. A national inventory or the completion/updating of existing data is a means to this end. In its analysis phase, the nfp process serves to identify the necessary studies to be conducted on areas where information gaps exist and which need in-depth analysis.

In order to be able to enhance participation and institutional development, information needs to be collected and analysed on existing preconditions for participation and about interests and capacities of the different stakeholders/institutions influencing or being influenced by the forest sector as well as existing and potential communication channels between them.

In order to be able to monitor developments in the sector, the information needs to be stored and made available for quite a long period. Building up data bases (see Box opposite) on specific issues (e.g. stakeholders, deforestation, forest products, etc.) is a useful tool to this end.

It is not enough to collect, store and analyse all these data. The results of the sector review – especially those demonstrating the value of the forest goods and services – should be made available to all relevant stakeholders and civil society. Thus the presentations of the sector review results will need to be adapted to different “clients” as regards language, issues to be quoted and even dissemination channels – e.g. workshops, brochures, radio/television, traditional communication channels. Sometimes stakeholder capacity building is needed for them to be able to share information. Translation into local languages and simplification of important information, especially official texts (policies, laws), are often necessary to inform local stakeholders. The organization of national and/or subnational seminars/workshops can greatly contribute to awareness raising and dissemination of information.

Often, the results of the analysis will be judged differently by different people or groups. Such judgements may not always stem from an impartial perspective but can derive from certain particular interests, which in turn need to be analysed. Involvement of subject matter experts and impartial scientists to provide specific information and independent opinions based on their specialized knowledge may be crucial to obtain different perspectives.

## Outputs

The sector review together with recommendations is a key output during this phase. Stakeholder-specific versions of the sector review enable a common awareness and understanding of perspectives, problems, challenges and opportunities in the forest sector, always to be perceived in concert with other sectors and in terms of its relevance for broader development goals.

The forest sector’s public profile can be notably increased, provided that the sector review is prepared in a broadly participatory manner, and that the results of the analysis are shared and published. By gaining a clear picture about the

importance of the sector, it is possible to elevate the profile of the forest sector in society, and strengthen commitment and political will.

Another important output from the analysis of the stakeholders will be clarity on and acceptance of their roles and mandates.

The analysis and sector review provides a sound basis for planning, but it is not a once-only effort that ends when the sector review is published. It is very much part of the evolving cycle that starts again when lessons are learned and new information becomes available. Hence, the analysis phase (as the other three phases) is a continuous component of the nfp process.

## Policy formulation and strategic planning

Policy formulation means normative definition of a desirable future relative to forests, as well as the identification and subsequent prioritization of goals and guidelines for policy implementation.

National policy formulation must be considered a *sine qua non* in several respects: it guides all further steps of the nfp process, from legal review to strategic and operational planning; it underpins and communicates the forest sector's significance for national development strategies; it stands witness to the government's commitment to sustainable development and expresses its political will to this effect; and it harmonizes the different interests of forest stakeholders towards common goals in support of the country's sustainable development.

### Country case: Bolivia – nfp and decentralization

During implementation of the nfp it became clear that the departmental (provincial) levels felt little affinity with the national forest plan and that the activities, even when carried out at the departmental level, were considered as "national" activities. There was no local support for effective implementation. This changed when the government policy was redirected towards administrative decentralization. During this phase, activities were primarily focused on the integration and decentralization of planning and policy-making, the establishment of network structures and the integration of training into the planning process. Proper communication and participatory approaches proved to be crucial factors in Bolivia to create a general feeling that the various parties concerned with forest issues (governmental – both the planning ministry as well as sectoral departments, universities, NGOs, industry, regional and local structures and representatives of the local communities) – could have a concrete say in planning the activities. The publication of a quarterly newsletter with news from the departments also improved communication and increased the feeling that all those involved were actively participating in planning the sector. As a consequence of decentralization, national financing became the responsibility of departmental and local structures.

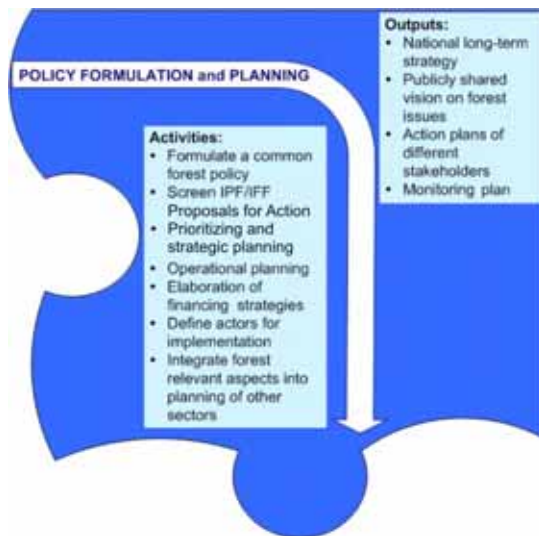
In the meantime, a revised strategic plan (Política y plan estratégico de desarrollo forestal de Bolivia) was endorsed to guide all forest actors towards coherent measures for sustainable development of the forest sector nationwide.

It must be noted that various stakeholder groups develop and pursue their own individual forest policies, which may be more or less elaborated and competitive, depending on the respective group's degree of self-organization, capacity and political leverage.

Harmonizing and consolidating these different views in an equitable, commonly accepted and officially adopted national forest policy statement represents an important step forward. It facilitates the design and updating of legal instruments to support the implementation of the policy.

Strategic sector planning consists of identifying and adopting the ways and means to achieve the policy goals. It is based on overarching political objectives and strategies (e.g. national sustainable development strategy, poverty reduction strategies), the country forest policy and legal framework, and in the participatory mechanisms used during the policy formulation phase (e.g. stakeholder consultation mechanisms).

The planning phase includes the definition of common objectives and the development of common and jointly agreed strategies and action plans to meet them. However, planning is a sensitive issue when antagonists get together. Specific challenges are to resolve conflicts between different stakeholders and their spheres of interest (which may not emerge until this phase, despite a previous joint analysis) and to bring national objectives and needs together with those of different subnational levels. The main instrument to ensure that the principles are respected in this phase is negotiation.



The content of planning (i.e. *what* is to be planned) depends largely on the results of the policy formulation exercise, which in turn is informed by previous analyses. Planning can pertain to different areas. The analysis can result in planning of political, institutional or operational changes – depending on which bottlenecks for sector development have been identified. Possible changes include legal amendments, institutional reforms, improvement of market framework conditions, scaling up of participatory forest management practices, or physical measures such as an afforestation programme.

The planning phase is again an iterative process, which takes place at different levels with various stakeholders. Adaptive planning that incorporates the results of evaluation, monitoring and learning ensures that an nfp responds

to changes in the country context, technical innovation and evolution of knowledge. The planning phase sometimes needs facilitation by an independent entity.

Two important issues at the beginning of this phase are to: a) agree on *who* has the right, knowledge or responsibility to plan; and b) define the level of participation and responsibility for the different stakeholders (see Chapter 2). In any case broad societal consent needs to be established, to be able to implement the actions envisaged during the planning phase. Furthermore, all planning should strive to be realistic.

Financing of the envisaged measures is another constituent aspect of planning under an nfp. The emphasis on highly realistic planning distinguishes nfps from previous planning frameworks (see Chapter 1). Although sustainable forest management must by definition be economically viable and self-supporting, there is a need to review and improve traditional financing mechanisms as well as to promote innovative ones for the conservation, adequate use and rehabilitation of the resource base during periods of transition from non-sustainable to sustainable practices. The contribution of own national resources (public and private) needs to be planned for in order to achieve national ownership.



*Different stakeholders are likely to have differing and even conflicting expectations*

## Activities

For policy formulation different stakeholders have to be empowered to voice their forest-related political visions in an equitable dialogue, and different

### Country case: Cambodia – participation

Cambodia has placed a strong emphasis on the participation of stakeholders and integration of all groups linked to the forest sector. During the forest policy reform a community forestry sub-decree was developed and a six-month nationwide consultation process was conducted, involving all major stakeholders. To this end, a task force with 12 representatives from ministries, NGOs and communities implemented and guided the process. After clarifying the structures, procedures, roles, mandates and principles of collaboration of the task force meetings, consultations took place at the local, provincial and national levels with NGOs, donors, civil society, community representatives, etc. This resulted in improved communication between different stakeholder groups at all levels and a better understanding of the national forest policy and nfp process. All stakeholders had the possibility to discuss and participate actively. This resulted in increased ownership, a higher motivation to participate in community forestry and a decrease in mistrust between stakeholders.

groups' specific goals need to be cast into a government-led, participatory national policy document. Most likely, the respective information, discussion and negotiation will best be obtained through workshops on different levels and in different parts of the country. If a forest policy statement is not available, or if it is outdated, a participatory policy formulation exercise represents an excellent entry point to launch or revitalize an nfp process.

A national forest policy document states in broad terms the destiny of the country's forest resources, and how they are expected to contribute to the development of the present and the future generations of the country. When this document is produced in a truly participatory way, accepted by all stakeholders and harmonized with the other development policies of the country, it facilitates enormously the development of forest legislation.

In fact, it is quite common that the updating of forest-related legal instruments comes immediately after the official adoption of the national forest policy statement.

The policy also facilitates the development of strategic and operational planning for the sector. In order to embark on planning, it has proved to be a very useful way to screen the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action and rank them according to country priorities, to identify specific activities to fill in gaps in implementation, and define a time frame as well as responsibilities within the country's nfp process.

Planned activities have to be prioritized, taking into account the capacities for financing, implementation and steering. Action plans should be elaborated in a participatory way, defining roles and responsibilities of different



stakeholders (including those of other sectors) and identifying investment estimates. They should also be accompanied by a monitoring system.

Planning is not restricted to the elaboration of a strategic forest-sector plan, which integrates issues from other relevant sectors, but it also pertains to the integration of forest-relevant aspects into the planning of other sectors and stakeholders.

The financing strategy should be developed in close collaboration with the financial sector. It is a key element of the nfp process as it identifies different alternatives to finance the nfp activities. Hence, the strategy needs to combine various sources of funding and financial mechanisms (e.g. traditional and innovative, domestic and foreign, public and private). This kind of “blended funding” or “bundling” of financing instruments serves several purposes.

First, it enhances financial security and a predictable flow of funding to the sector. Second, it reinforces a country’s autonomy to implement its own priorities, and strengthens national sovereignty. Third, long-term independence from donor financing (in other words, financial sustainability) is crucial for the nfp’s success.

In order to plan the financing of envisaged measures and to consolidate the public budget of the forest sector, it is important to optimize sector revenues.

Cofinancing forest-related measures from the budgets/revenues of other sectors is another, supplementary option (see Chapter 2). Instruments such as an environmental fiscal reform can effectively assist in tapping or redirecting domestic resources towards sustainable forest management or by setting respective incentives or disincentives. Innovative financing mechanisms and public support are key measures to promote the transition from unsustainable to sustainable forest management. Adequate valuation of the whole set of forest functions to society and to the country’s economy is of considerable help to highlight the importance of long-term investment in the sector.

Finally, establishing a positive climate and enabling framework conditions for private investment is crucial for the nfp’s success. Private investors will be prepared to engage in long-term investments such as sustainable forest



*All stakeholders should be involved in the elaboration of scenarios*

management only as long as their capital is sufficiently secure and investment risks reasonably low.

## Outputs

An important output of the planning phase will be a publicly shared vision on forest issues. This is often spelled out in a forest policy statement.

Related outputs will be a negotiated national long-term strategy for the forest sector built from the agreed objectives and priorities stated in the policy, known and accepted by all stakeholders. The set of outputs of this phase is complemented by additional (sub-) strategies addressing specific needs of the nfp, e.g. financing, communication, information and capacity building.

To make planning operational, action plans for prioritized measures should be put in place. They could address different stakeholders, depending on the issues articulated. For example:

- ◆ institutional reform;
- ◆ legal amendments (including other sectors);
- ◆ physical realizations (e.g. afforestation, forest management, protection of forest ecosystems);
- ◆ capacity building;
- ◆ information management;
- ◆ communication;
- ◆ financing of the planned actions (investment programmes).

To facilitate implementation, action plans should provide clear indications of priority actions, timing, investment estimates and actors involved.

## Implementation

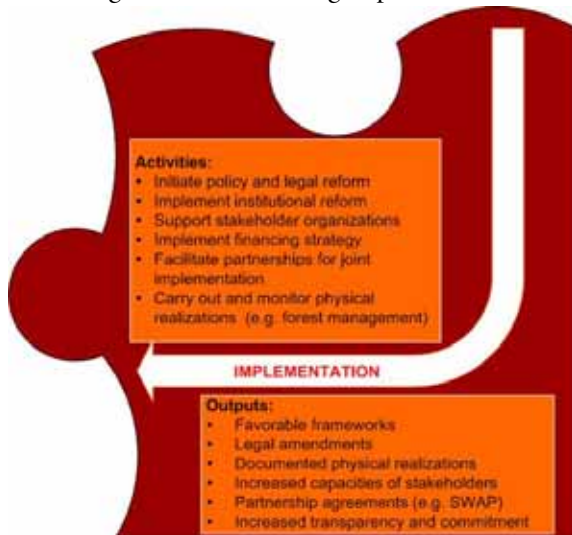
This phase is about implementing what has been planned in the policy formulation and planning phase. It is the decisive phase for an nfp to achieve impact.

Previous frameworks were often criticized for their deficits in implementation partly owing to unrealistic planning (see Chapter 2), and lack of capacities and funding.

In order for implementation to take place, it has to be based on realistic and demand-oriented planning, putting special emphasis on the availability of corresponding financial and human resources.

The implementation may concern such diverse topics/elements as policy revision, legal amendments, institutional reform or practical forestry measures. Some of these issues are dependent on others so that a realistic chronology of implementation steps is needed. Successful amendments/changes in framework normative and institutional conditions might be a precondition for implementation of practical forestry measures. Investments by the private sector will only happen if sustainable forest management has a positive rate of

return and if there is a certain tenure security. Although sustainable forest management has a high potential for being profitable, the shift from unsustainable to sustainable systems needs support.



In many countries, exploitative systems prevail in the forest sector, and regulating measures are needed that favour sustainable forest management practices and sanction unsustainable activities. If supplementary incentives in the form of subsidies are given to the private sector, exit strategies should be considered from the very beginning.

Depending on the issue, implementation will be carried

out by different public and private stakeholders and should be coordinated by the nfp coordination body in a participatory way. Often capacity building is necessary to allow all stakeholders to fulfil their defined roles adequately.

Partnerships between stakeholders (including donors) for joint implementation are essential to increase efficiency and impact of implementation.

Implementation of legal reform does not only mean that laws and regulations are amended and have passed all necessary procedural steps, but also that these laws and regulations are applied and respected in practice. To this end, procedures that are too complicated and burdensome and hamper the application of laws and regulations should be avoided (see Box opposite). However, besides capacity building, information and communication, a certain level of control will always be necessary. Hence the need for a recognized and well-represented coordination body.

The implementation phase also relates to obtaining funds, putting into practice the financing strategy, investment programmes and projects, as well as the coordination and follow-up of activities.

## Activities

Depending on the outcome of preceding policy formulation and strategic planning exercises, legal and institutional reform may become necessary. While respective proposals should come out of the consultative process, the decision about the enactment or amendment of statutory laws rests with the legislature. The amount of time needed for legal amendments must not be underestimated since proposals for legal amendments need to be submitted to legislative

processes that are sometimes lengthy. The next step is to work out regulations, in order to translate political will and laws into precise guidelines for action. They should be clear and as simple as possible. It is not enough that they are drafted, but they have to be communicated to the respective target group (e.g. informing local people of the legal procedures necessary to establish community forests) and very often they have to be supported. Hence, training (e.g. for extensionists in communicating new regulations) and didactic material are needed to help disseminate the new regulations.

Changes to the legal and regulatory framework are best implemented swiftly, before the momentum of policy formulation and strategic planning is lost.

To ensure that the improved laws and regulations are applied in the field, and beyond training and capacity building, a promotion and control system for law enforcement is needed, and incentives should be provided for, eventually including a revision of fiscal policies. Current law enforcement strategies tend to be more participatory (based on active local community involvement); and more focused on information and early detection than on repression.

### **Country case: Cameroon – lengthy procedures for community forestry**

According to Cameroonian legislation, local people have the opportunity to create community forests. Responsibility, ownership and benefits are transferred from the government to local communities.

Procedures to apply for and manage a community forest are detailed in the Manual of the Procedure for the Attribution, and Norms for the Management, of Community Forests (1998). Ten consecutive steps are prescribed, starting with a first village meeting, including submission of application documents and elaboration of a management plan up to implementation. Time-consuming and costly activities have to be implemented including delimitation and mapping of the foreseen forest area, forest inventories, data analysis, negotiations about land use and forest management options as well as developing the management plan.

The pace of the process was extremely slow: even after a period of six years, none of the pilot villages had begun the implementation stage and some villages had only passed two steps. The process of attribution was sometimes interrupted at any stage and at any institutional level. This may have been due to its complicated nature, the lack of routine among (forest) administration staff, and unclear legal procedures. However, very often the underlying cause was also a special personal interest of one of the main actors. Among these interests were: not to lose power, not to lose financial benefits, and perhaps to create new ones. The procedural steps were later revised and the Manual of Procedures adapted, based on various field experiences in different parts of the country.

### Country case: Indonesia – progressive policies not yet realized

Recognizing the importance of sustainable forest management for Indonesia's development, the government has consistently pursued the development of progressive national forest policies and legislation. As early as 1982 the Forestry Act 5 was ratified requiring environmentally sound management for present and future generations. In 1990, the government formalized national commitments under the framework of a national forest programme. A series of forestry decrees – covering national compliance with international conventions such as criteria and indicators and biological diversity – sought enhanced participation of indigenous and local communities in forest planning and implementation. Institutional reforms (a newly merged Ministry of Forestry and Estate Crops) acquired the political and economic clout necessary to ensure that national forest policies were carried through. Recent reforms, planned activities and institutions involved in Indonesia's national forest programme represent a solid basis for attaining the goal of sustainable forest management.

Unfortunately, deforestation in Indonesia continues, plantations (i.e. oil-palm), logging and human settlement activities are still being authorized on some protected forestland, meaningful local participation in forest planning remains a challenge, allocation of forest sector benefits are sometimes inequitable, and localized conflict over forest land use persists. Problems facing forest use stem not from weaknesses in policies or reforms but rather from the lack of implementation and enforcement. Limited capacity of institutions and sometimes the influences of other economic interests lead to uneven application of rules and regulations.

For all components of the policy and legal reform that touch upon other sectors, a common, coordinated timeline needs to be established. This means that forest issues have to be included in ongoing reform processes of other sectors.

A very powerful information campaign needs to make the policy and legal changes visible to all stakeholders and the public. It should use tailor-made instruments and appropriate media to reach out to the various target groups.

To develop the implementation capacity of national institutions and other key actors systematically, institutional reforms and capacity building are often implemented.

The nfp process includes long-term institutional strengthening for:

- ◆ national-level administration of forestry and natural resources;
- ◆ subnational and local-level administration of forestry and natural resources;
- ◆ research and development of forestry and forest products;
- ◆ forestry education and training;
- ◆ information and extension;
- ◆ capacity building within decentralized programmes to strengthen local-level institutions (e.g. district administrations), local NGOs, private

enterprises and grassroots organizations in their respective roles and functions;

- ♦ definition/promotion of framework conditions conducive to high ethical standards and human resource development for public- and private-sector stakeholders.

The proposals for reform must be converted into a detailed description of the future structure, including organizational charts, job descriptions, responsibilities and lines of command, as well as budgetary implications. They need to be based on the new definition emanating from the nfp process on the roles and mandates of public- and private-sector institutions, associations and NGOs.

The process of institutional reform is usually delicate and lengthy. Staff relocations, which often result from institutional reform, will take considerable time. Timelines of contracts with technical and administrative personnel may have to be respected, training may be needed in the wake of shifting competences, resource allocation needs to be organized, etc. Fundamental reforms of functions, training, career plans, better salaries and incentives, and relations within and outside the government may have to be instituted. For changes to last, training and integration into curricula must be envisaged as a long-term process.

Stakeholder organizations have to be initiated and/or strengthened. Capacity building in technical as well as management issues is often needed.

In order to implement financing strategies, revenue collection (fees, royalties, taxes) has to be improved. Moreover, enabling conditions for human and financial resources investment by private enterprises, NGOs, local communities and individual households should be created. This can be achieved by removing constraints and disincentives and by introducing appropriate incentives including security of tenure or long-term user rights.



*Countries concerned and their international partners together must find a cooperative way of getting involved in the nfp process*

### Country case: Costa Rica – financing strategies of nfp

One of the most significant achievements of Costa Rica is its successful reversal in the rate of deforestation from about 60 000 hectares deforested per year in the 1970s to a present annual net gain in forested area. The forest cover has increased from 25 percent of the territory to about 47 percent. An important element in the nfp process was created through the strategy to internalize the costs of environmental management by compensating those who contribute to improving or maintaining environmental qualities. Within this strategy, called Payment of Environmental Services, the environmental services of forests (water cycle protection, biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration, natural beauty) are considered and an institutional framework and mechanism for payment of these environmental services were established by the national Forest Financing Fund (FONAFIFO). The main features of the strategy are:

- The beneficiaries of the environmental services (society, industry, tourists, etc.) have to pay and also have a certain degree of control on the environmental services.
- The payments are raised by tax on fuel as well as water and tourism fees, which were established through voluntary agreements with hydropower companies, breweries, hotels and tourism agencies.
- The forest owners invest these payments in maintenance for primary forests, establishment of forest plantations, or forest management (e.g. agreements include a prohibition of land use changes on private land).

The forest law of 1996 built up the legal framework of this process. Through scientific studies, economic valuation tools were developed to encourage FONAFIFO in extending the payment for natural resources.

Source: [www.fonafifo.com](http://www.fonafifo.com)

Reasonable prices for forest products and marketing opportunities for the producers are powerful incentives for investment in forests. To be efficient and effective, these systems must be simple on an administrative level, legally sound and should facilitate coordination of the financial and technical inputs from various sources (including other sectors). Another element of the financing strategy is to internalize the cost of forest management in other sectors (see Box on the left). In essence, implementation activities should be more closely linked to market incentives and disincentives as opposed to subsidies.

A self-financing approach does not reduce the need for public and private investment in social and environmental aspects of an nfp. Instead, through carefully considered improvements in the efficiency of existing (or innovative) financial mechanisms, more overall resources can be directed to address issues of priority.

For all practical realizations, equitable benefit sharing and responsibility for negative impacts are decisive and should be monitored in a transparent and participatory way. Related activities may be to organize technical exchange and

to include research if the need arises. Partnerships for joint management can increase efficiency and positive impacts.

## Outputs

One set of outputs will concern favourable framework conditions that will help establish the enabling environment for sustainable forest development. They comprise some of the elements of the nfp process:

- ◆ laws and regulations which reflect the previously revised national forest policy;
- ◆ legal amendments in related sectors and regarding cross-cutting policy objectives which are favourable for the development of the forest sector;
- ◆ improved institutional set-up and capable human resources;
- ◆ mechanisms for dialogue and consensus building among all stakeholders;
- ◆ financial strategies and mechanisms that facilitate funding the transition from unsustainable to sustainable forest management;
- ◆ investment and incentives for sustainable forest management capacity building of stakeholders at different levels.

Another set of outputs will consist of those related to field-level implementation and practical realizations (e.g. afforestation, forest management). Such outputs include afforested area, number of hectares under sustainable management, number of hectares under protection, monetary units of investment in forestry, etc.). These outputs will have to be documented, monitored and reported on.

Valuation of the contribution of forests to the country's economy, to poverty reduction and to sustainable development should also be improved. Increased law implementation (e.g. monitoring and reducing illegal logging) is another expected output of the process.

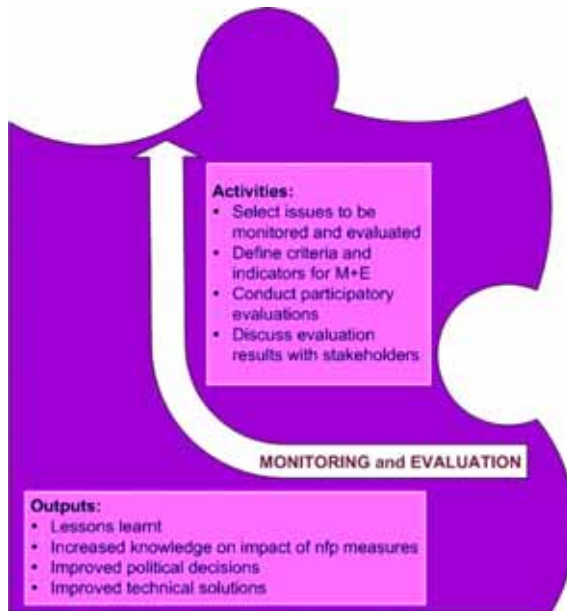
Concerning the stakeholders, the main output is increased capacities, not only in technical but also in organizational and management matters, and especially in participatory and intersectoral approaches. Increased participation in and transparency of an nfp process will most probably result in more partnership agreements or other forms of cooperation between stakeholders.

Finally, "immaterial" (non-tangible) outputs must not be forgotten – i.e. increased transparency, credibility, commitment.

## Monitoring and evaluation

In the cyclical process, this phase concerns the evaluation of the implementation progress of the entire nfp process and the assessment of its impacts.





It includes indicators of progress based on the different principles (see Chapter 2) and takes place at different levels, involving different stake-holders. It deals with procedural as well as contextual aspects.

Impact can be assessed in regard to the mitigation of the main problems and the achievement of objectives identified in the analysis and planning phases.

However, depending on the area of intervention, it can sometimes take a long time before the impact of

forest measures can be evaluated. Criteria, indicators and milestones to measure achievement of intermediary results and impacts can help overcome this difficulty. Depending on the evaluation results, policies, strategies and action plans may be continued, further developed or amended. Sometimes it is necessary to expand the analysis of certain issues in order to understand fully the often complex systems and to react adequately to the evaluation results. Involving stakeholders in M&E is key for learning and improving quality of the nfp with every loop of analysis, policy formulation and planning, implementation and M&E.

If we understand the set of: a) analysis; b) policy formulation and strategic planning; c) implementation; and d) monitoring and evaluation as one cycle – or loop – of the nfp process, it can be repeated over and over to reflect improvements from learning.

Whereas in the first loop mainly the effectiveness of tools and methods is reviewed, in the second loop the underlying assumptions have to be critically questioned.

### Activities

The most important activity at the inception of this phase is to select the issues to be monitored. Selection will depend upon the national forest development targets and strategies as well as practical priorities. Leading questions are: What information do we need (based on which criteria)? How can we measure these issues (indicators)? Note that indicators should bear quantitative and qualitative components, as well as clear indications of the geographical coverage and the time frame of the observation. Pointing out the means of verification

for each indicator will facilitate its regular measurement. Usually, indicators are developed in a participatory way (e.g. in a workshop specifically for that purpose) so that all stakeholder groups are represented, and are monitored by a specific M&E unit, which should be established to support the nfp coordination mechanism.

Checking achievements and impacts against the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action should be part of the M&E process, and is a good start to support the identification of the country nfp indicators. Also, it is important to note that M&E is not limited to aspects within the forest sector, but covers phenomena that may emerge in other sectors.

Participatory evaluations can be an appropriate instrument to help involved parties learn by practical experience and to increase their ownership of the process. Issues to be discussed could include: How do stakeholders assess the quality of participation? (For example, do they participate adequately, do they feel respected as partners in decision making and implementation or do they feel reduced to the role of bystanders?) What is the progress of community/participatory forestry (field realizations, impacts)?



*A monitoring and evaluation system is an  
inseparable part of nfps*

As has already been stated, M&E relates to procedural as well as contextual aspects of the process (see Box). Indicators combining quantitative and qualitative aspects should include external influences and changing framework conditions:

- ◆ external influences and changing framework conditions that have to be monitored as they might necessitate a shift or adaptation in actions and/or objectives;
- ◆ a useful instrument for M&E are sufficiently developed information systems (e.g. on land use, forest resources and biodiversity, socio-economic development) which are the basis for assessing trends as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of the forest policy implementation.

In any case it is imperative that:

- ◆ indicators be clearly defined in terms of benchmarks of achievements (quantitative and qualitative, timelines and geographical coverage of results/impacts);
- ◆ data be collected in a systematic and transparent manner;
- ◆ indicators be coherently assessed, and results concisely documented in easy-to-understand language;
- ◆ lessons learned be fed back to the stakeholders in timely fashion.

## Procedural and contextual issues for M&E

### Procedural

- definition of criteria;
- stakeholder involvement;
- coordination in implementation of multilateral environmental agreements;
- level of integration of the nfp into national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, etc.;
- coordination with other sectors.

### Contextual

- degree to which planned actions have been taken;
- impact of policy implementation;
- degree to which specific objectives have been achieved (predefined changes of conditions in the field, institutional patterns, framework conditions);
- degree to which desired impacts have materialized (changes concerning status of forest resources, financial resources, the role of forestry in poverty alleviation, overall economic development).



*M&E is not an examination by national or international experts*

## Outputs

The main output of this phase is documenting and analysing the lessons learned through the nfp implementation.

The outcomes of evaluations are commonly presented as evaluation reports, which should be prepared based on the expressed needs of the target groups. Apart from this kind of formalized institutional learning, informal processes of reflection and review shall take place. Stakeholders who have been granted the status of observers or active participants in the evaluation will have gained expertise and insight into the process and will thus be able to induce changes in their personal environment and to propose amendments to the process based on their gradual learning. This more elevated degree of knowledge and awareness at the end of the M&E phase, when attained by all participants, will be reflected in the elaboration of the following loop of the nfp cycle.

Providing a regular two-way information flow between stakeholders and the M&E unit will be an important prerequisite for establishing institutional memory. This is of particular importance given the sometimes unstable political context in which nfps take place and the risk of a succeeding government discarding the nfp as something inherited from a previous era. In this respect, a review phase developed in a participatory way is of prime importance for continuity of and commitment to the process – two of the proven key factors for the success of any nfp.

### **Country case: Cyprus – measuring progress and tracking implementation**

An important aspect of the nfp in Cyprus involves the development and integration of an information database to ensure that implementation activities attain desired goals and objectives. The database consists of information on planned activities that are categorized according to seven themes or subprogrammes: reforestation, forest products, forest protection, ecosystem conservation, water, local plans and capacity building. Under each subprogramme heading, multiple activities and corresponding details such as cost, duration and responsible organizations, are arranged into a table matrix. Rapid appraisal techniques (Cost/Benefit and SWOT analyses) are used to provide common, comparable estimates of value for social/economic costs and benefits of environmental services and outcomes resulting from implementation activities. The database design is adaptable to existing government databases, yet is straightforward enough to be used by a variety of implementing organizations that may have either computer or paper administration systems. A proposed monitoring strategy involves integrating database information with both a geographic information system with enhanced data on non-timber forest values and country-adapted criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Reviews of the nfp are to occur in conjunction with five-year government planning cycles; preparation of a new programme plan is forecast for the tenth year. The development of information and monitoring systems for planning that were transparent and comprehensive provided an important step towards Cyprus's joining the European Union.



## 4. Learning and sharing

### At the regional and international levels

Experience with nfp development may provide important lessons for others. Nfps are a source of continuous learning and are best improved by comparison, adaptation and experimentation. It is impossible to design nfp model approaches as blueprints for all, but practitioners may benefit from other countries' experience in regard to specific nfp issues (e.g. mechanisms for participation, cross-sectoral involvement, financial mechanisms, valuation of forest benefits to society), and then assess whether the approaches used elsewhere could be applicable in their country context.

The countries report on their nfp progress at global forest events such as the United Nations Forum on Forests, the FAO Committee on Forests and the latter's regional commissions in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Near East, and North America. These are opportunities for sharing and learning.

Also, regional initiatives for nfp support and sharing of experiences are becoming more common (see Box, next page). Such fora have been successfully used for learning and consensus building in pursuit of a common understanding of forest policy processes, especially among neighbouring countries. Approaches such as ecosystem management, transboundary conservation initiatives, and criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management are strengthened by a basic common understanding of forest policy issues.

### At the national and subnational levels

Sharing information with other countries is important, but it is even more important to share information with stakeholders and related sectors at the national and subnational levels.

Promoting nfp implementation in a participatory way involves decentralization, but even in well-decentralized forestry processes, central levels retain the responsibility for providing policy guidance and regulatory instruments for sustainable forest management. Decentralization does not mean transferring to local levels those functions or targets that have not been achieved at the central level. Rather, it means guiding and supporting institutional and human capacity building for policy implementation at the decentralized levels, as well as in sectors that influence forestry but do not have sufficient information about it. Here is where the nfp process can intervene. Some countries promote subnational forest programmes (e.g. State Forest Programmes in Mexico or Regional Forest Round Tables in Guatemala).

### Some regional nfp processes

EFCA (*Estrategia Forestal Centro Americana*) was launched in 2002 by the Central American Commission for Environment and Development as a regional process comprising of seven countries. EFCA aims to foster a regional understanding of and approach to cross-cutting issues and to facilitate the countries' respective nfps. The strategy has promoted debate and information sharing on innovative financing mechanisms (including payment for environmental services), reinvigorated the Lepaterique Process on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, revised the Proposals for Action of the IPF/IFF/UNFF in the Central American context, worked to combat transboundary illegal logging, etc. With initial support by the National Forest Programme Facility, EFCA has evolved into a consolidated working space for numerous partners. More information about EFCA can be found at: [www.iucn.org/places/orma/EFCA/website](http://www.iucn.org/places/orma/EFCA/website)

COMIFAC (*Commission en charge des forêts d'Afrique centrale*) involves ten Central African countries in forest-related dialogue. COMIFAC assumes responsibility for forest-related matters in the Congo Basin region, guiding, coordinating and promoting decisions for better forest management. Its *Plan de Convergence*, adopted by the Council of Ministers, represents a common platform for action, focusing on harmonization of forestry and fiscal policies, resource assessment and management, biodiversity conservation, valuation of forest resources, capacity building, research, financial mechanisms and partnerships. More information about COMIFAC can be found at: [www.comifac.org/accueilfr.htm](http://www.comifac.org/accueilfr.htm)

ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) involves ten countries in the common goal of peaceful cooperation and shared prosperity. It focuses on 24 areas of cooperation, including environment ([www.aseansec.org/4916.htm](http://www.aseansec.org/4916.htm)) and agriculture and forestry ([www.aseansec.org/4921.htm](http://www.aseansec.org/4921.htm)). Active since 1967, ASEAN has reached various agreements and promoted many initiatives, such as the Asian Wildlife Law Enforcement Network, launched in December 2005.

ACTO (Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization) involves eight state members in the promotion of joint initiatives towards harmonious development of the Amazon region, through environmental preservation and rational use of the region's natural resources. Forestry activities are guided by the Tarapoto Process on Criteria and Indicators for the Sustainability of Amazon Forests. More information about ACTO can be found at: [www.otca.org.br/en](http://www.otca.org.br/en)

Others engage in model forest processes<sup>3</sup> to promote participatory strategic planning in specific geographic areas of the country. It is usually under the responsibility of the central nfp secretariat to look for opportunities for information sharing at subnational levels, and explore them with potential partners. It is also through in-country information sharing that nfp insufficiencies (e.g. lack of local stakeholder knowledge on the IPF/IFF/UNFF Proposals for Action) can be overcome.

<sup>3</sup> More information on Model Forest processes can be found at: [www.rcfa-cfan.org/english/profile.16.htm](http://www.rcfa-cfan.org/english/profile.16.htm)

## Who can help?

Nfp development requires continuous learning and testing, but the nfp practitioner does not stand alone. Help and information can be gathered in the country, in the region or internationally. Some global initiatives (see Box below) are currently committed to support country-led nfp processes. In particular, they provide conceptual support for the adaptation of nfp principles in a given country's context. Support can take a variety of forms, including grants, training events, thematic workshops, methods and tools, dissemination of information, and others.

Global initiatives to support nfp development		
Initiative or institution	Type of support	Where to obtain more information
National Forest Programme Facility	Small grants to nfp stakeholders in partner countries  Information platform for nfp implementation	<a href="http://www.nfp-facility.org">www.nfp-facility.org</a>
FAO Forestry Department	Technical assistance, training and global information for nfp development	<a href="http://www.fao.org/forestry/nfp">www.fao.org/forestry/nfp</a>
GTZ International Forest Policy Project (IWP)	Advisory support for nfp development	<a href="http://www.gtz.de/en/praxis/1822.htm">www.gtz.de/en/praxis/1822.htm</a>
European Tropical Forest Research Network	Information, training material	<a href="http://www.etfrn.org/etfrn/topics/policy/index.html">www.etfrn.org/etfrn/topics/policy/index.html</a>
PROFOR	Conceptual and analytical support	<a href="http://www.profor.info">www.profor.info</a>
Department of Knowledge Policy of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands	Information	<a href="mailto:h.j.f.savenije@minlnv.nl">h.j.f.savenije@minlnv.nl</a>
Wageningen International	Learning platform for the international course on "Interactive Forest and Nature Policy in Practice"	<a href="http://www.wi.wur.nl">www.wi.wur.nl</a>
Tropenbos	Information; research	<a href="http://www.tropenbos.nl">www.tropenbos.nl</a>
European Forestry Institute	Research, training, capacity building	<a href="http://www.efi.fi">www.efi.fi</a>
International Institute for Environment and Development	Forestry and land use programme provides advisory support and information to nfps	<a href="http://www.iied.org/NR/forestry/index.html">www.iied.org/NR/forestry/index.html</a>



Under the initiative that generated the present publication, named “Nfps for All”, a set of **training material** is also being produced, targeting different issues such as: introduction to the nfp concept and principles; enhancing stakeholder participation in nfp processes; and developing financing strategies and mechanisms for nfp implementation.

More information about the training modules can be obtained from FAO and the Facility (nfp-facility@fao.org).

A new approach to knowledge management and information sharing is the one of communities of practice that can be established at the national, regional and global levels. They bring together experts and institutions with specific knowledge and experience, and who are willing to share their insights with potential users. Examples are the FAO-facilitated community of practice on enhancing stakeholder participation in nfps ([www.fao.org/forestry/site/14691/en](http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/14691/en)) and one on financial mechanisms for sustainable forest management ([www.fao.org/forestry/site/21127/en](http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/21127/en)).

Nfps remain a challenge, but a rewarding one when they are conducted under country leadership and build on strong participation and partnerships. In addition, they need to be intrasectorally consistent and intersectorally well linked. The benefits of nfps conducted in this way will certainly contribute to the sustainable use and conservation of forests for all.




*Various supporting initiatives ensure that nfp practitioners do not stand alone*

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One of the main achievements of the international dialogue on forests since the 1990s has been the common agreement among participants that all countries should develop national forest programmes (nfps) to lead and steer their forest policy development and implementation processes in a participatory and intersectoral way. *Understanding national forest programmes* has been prepared to facilitate coordination, collaboration and capacity building among stakeholders to help consolidate nfps as genuinely participatory, cross-sectoral, country-led processes for achieving sustainable forest management. In four sections, it describes how the nfp concept evolved; proposes a useful clustering of nfp principles and provides guidance on how to approach and assess them at the country level; discusses the nfp process in terms of an iterative cycle of analysis, forest policy formulation and planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation; and introduces opportunities for knowledge sharing and support initiatives that can help nfp practitioners achieve their goals. The publication is directed to all those involved in nfps, either in their development or their implementation. It is not a recipe book, but rather a guidance document intended to inspire thinking and acting on best practices that correspond to the conditions of individual countries.