

Implementing the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests



Federal Ministry of
Food, Agriculture
and Consumer Protection



Implementing the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests

Please cite as: FAO. 2013. *Implementing the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests*. Rome, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

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Acknowledgements

This publication has been made possible by the contributions of many people and organizations. In particular, FAO thanks Peter Gondo for preparing the draft; the coordinators of the pilot projects – Leonardo Chavez, David Kpelle, Gil Mendoza and Sormongar Zwuen – for their contributions to the content and for helping develop and put in place the approach described in these pages; Madingou Andre-Jules, Bwalya Chendauka, Darlington Duwa, Tomas Fameso, Patrick Kariuki, Chandra Subash and Hijaba Ykhanbai for contributing experiences from their countries; Jhony Zapata and Masahiko Hori from FAO for the support they gave to the projects; Alastair Sarre for editing; Marco Perri for layout; and the German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection and Japan's Official Development Assistance for their generous financial support.



Key messages

- The Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (the “Forest Instrument”) provides a coherent overarching framework for operationalizing internationally agreed policies and measures for achieving sustainable forest management (SFM) and the four Global Objectives on Forests.
- The Forest Instrument looks at all aspects of management, development and conservation of all types of forests and provides a holistic, 360-degree view of forests and their economic, environmental and social functions.
- The Forest Instrument provides a good checklist for assessing the comprehensiveness of national forest programmes (NFPs) aimed at achieving SFM.
- The implementation of the Forest Instrument is a process and not an event or project, and therefore it should be integrated into national forest development frameworks and linked to national development goals and plans.
- The implementation of the Forest Instrument is useful for strengthening and enhancing the cohesion and ownership of, and participation in, NFPs and similar processes.
- The participation of, and dialogue among, stakeholders are the keys to the successful implementation of the Forest Instrument.
- The implementation of the Forest Instrument can enhance coordination among relevant multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and also enhance cross-sectoral coordination within countries.
- The implementation of the Forest Instrument can help identify new priority areas and has significant potential to leverage support and additional resources from ongoing activities and from stakeholders and funding sources.
- The implementation of the Forest Instrument can help demonstrate the contributions of forests to national economies beyond gross domestic product.
- Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the progress made by countries in implementing the Forest Instrument will provide an informed basis for periodically assessing the effectiveness of the Forest Instrument and the international arrangement on forests and for reporting on progress towards achieving the four Global Objectives on Forests.



Introduction and background

Forests cover one-third of the world's land area and provide a wide range of economic, social, cultural and environmental services. More than 1.6 billion people depend to varying degrees on forests for their livelihoods and use them for fuel, timber, food, medicine and income. Forests and trees provide important environmental services, such as watershed protection, biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration and soil protection. Although the local, national and global importance of forests for human well-being, socio-economic development, poverty reduction, biodiversity conservation and environmental protection is widely acknowledged, forests continue to decline at a significant rate in some regions.

After several years of negotiation, the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) adopted, in May 2007, the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests, commonly known as the Forest Instrument. This international consensus was reached to boost the implementation of sustainable forest management (SFM) and thus to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental values of all types of forests for the benefit of present and future generations. More specifically, the purposes of the Forest Instrument are to:

- strengthen political commitment and action at all levels to implement the sustainable management of all types of forests effectively and to achieve the four Global Objectives on Forests (Box 1);
- enhance the contribution of forests to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in particular with respect to poverty eradication and environmental sustainability;
- provide a framework for national action and international cooperation.¹

Most countries are already implementing at least some elements of the 25 national policies and measures agreed in the Forest Instrument (listed in the annex), at various scales, mostly in the context of their national forest programmes or equivalent forest

THE FOUR GLOBAL OBJECTIVES ON FORESTS

The adoption of the Forest Instrument by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2007 reinforced the global commitment to SFM as the overarching principle for forest policy at both the national and international levels, and outlined future priorities in the form of the following four Global Objectives on Forests:

- 1 Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through SFM, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation.
- 2 Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people.
- 3 Increase significantly the area of sustainably managed forests, including protected forests, and increase the proportion of forest products derived from sustainably managed forests.
- 4 Reverse the decline in official development assistance for SFM and mobilize significantly increased new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of SFM.

¹United Nations General Assembly, 2008

development plans or programmes (collectively referred to here as NFPs). However, the majority of countries do not link such activities to the Forest Instrument due to a lack of awareness about the Forest Instrument. Many countries have not yet carried out systematic assessments of where they stand in relation to the Forest Instrument. Most do not deliberately monitor implementation of the Forest Instrument or progress towards the achievement of SFM and the Global Objectives on Forests. Awareness-raising and capacity-building at the country level are therefore crucial. A better understanding of the purpose and objectives of the Forest Instrument and its usefulness in achieving progress towards SFM is needed among stakeholders at the national level.

It is against this background that FAO initiated, in 2008, the first pilot project to facilitate the implementation of the Forest Instrument in Ghana, with funding from Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ). This was followed by three more pilot projects (in Liberia, Nicaragua and the Philippines), with funding from Germany's Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV). In 2011, FAO received additional funding support from Japan to assist countries in reporting to the UNFF on progress in their implementation of the Forest Instrument. As well as convening regional capacity-building workshops involving 60 countries, seven countries (India, Gabon, Kenya, Mongolia, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe) were supported in efforts on awareness-raising, stocktaking, priority-setting and reporting.

The pilot projects focused on capacity-building to address the lack of information and knowledge about the Forest Instrument. A systematic approach to the implementation and monitoring of the Forest Instrument was developed (FAO, 2011), and this was applied in the pilot-project countries. This document describes the approach and the lessons learned from its application, and it makes recommendations on how to implement the Forest Instrument.

Implementing the Forest Instrument

The 25 national policies and measures agreed in the Forest Instrument provide guidance to countries on a broad range of measures to be undertaken to strengthen SFM, covering social, economic and environmental aspects. The step-wise approach developed through the pilot projects links ongoing forest-related activities at the country level to the Forest Instrument and enables the strengths, weaknesses and gaps of these to be determined and for priorities to be established. The six steps of the approach are:

1. Raise awareness of the Forest Instrument.
2. Inventory ongoing forestry initiatives and map them against the 25 national policies and measures of the Forest Instrument.
3. Assess the situation against the 25 national policies and measures of the Forest Instrument.
4. Identify priority policies and measures.
5. Develop and implement an action plan.
6. Monitor, evaluate and report.

Critical to the approach is the participation of all relevant stakeholders in the forest sector and forest-related sectors that affect or are affected by forests or forest-related activities to ensure that their views and interests are taken on board and that they are aware of the Forest Instrument. A thorough stakeholder analysis and mapping exercise should therefore be undertaken by the lead agency prior to the commencement of implementation. It is likely that most stakeholders will be unaware of the Forest Instrument; a step-wise approach to implementation will help ensure that all relevant stakeholders are ready for each stage of implementation and can participate from informed positions. The key steps in the implementation approach are described in the following sections.

Step 1: Raise awareness of the Forest Instrument

Although the Forest Instrument was adopted by the international community in 2007, very few stakeholders, especially in developing countries, are aware of its existence, let alone of how it might help their countries to achieve SFM. The first step in implementing the Forest Instrument, therefore (and as enumerated in the step-wise approach described above), is to raise awareness about it among stakeholders. In particular, it is important to inform them of the purposes, objectives and agreed national policies and measures of the Forest Instrument, and how these are guided by the seven elements of SFM (Box 2) and can help in attaining the four Global Objectives on Forests.

Awareness-raising should target stakeholders in a wide range of sectors – such as agriculture, energy, water, trade, industry, finance, economic planning, lands and health

THE SEVEN THEMATIC ELEMENTS OF SFM

The Forest Instrument lays out seven thematic elements of SFM as a reference framework for SFM. They are:

- 1 Extent of forest resources
- 2 Forest biological diversity
- 3 Forest health and vitality
- 4 Productive functions of forests
- 5 Protective functions of forests
- 6 Socio-economic functions of forests
- 7 Legal, policy and institutional framework

– that affect, or are affected by, the forest sector. Other important groupings for targeting are politicians, local authorities, civil society, academia, the judiciary, worker unions, the private sector, statistics agencies, law enforcement, community-based forest user groups, focal points for international conventions, development partners and the media. The actual target list will vary depending on the country, but the aim is to make the Forest Instrument known within and outside the forest sector and within and outside government. Besides simply making it known, awareness-raising activities should aim to explain the background, purpose, implementation process and benefits of the Forest Instrument (Box 3) and the possible roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders. Such explanations, and the identification of roles, will help ensure ownership of the implementation process by stakeholders. Knowledge of the national policies and measures agreed in the Forest Instrument can be a powerful tool, especially for local non-governmental stakeholders, by which to remind government of the actions necessary for creating an enabling environment for SFM. Stakeholder groups can use the Forest Instrument to lobby for their interests.

BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING THE FOREST INSTRUMENT

Some of the commonly cited benefits of implementing the Forest Instrument are that it:

- forms an overarching framework for forestry development;
- can height political commitment to SFM at the national level;
- can increase focus on the social, economic and environmental contributions of forests at the national level and to internationally agreed development and environmental goals;
- provides a single framework for the coordination of national and international forest-related actions and a holistic and comprehensive “360 degree” view of forests that reduces the fragmentation of efforts and programmes;
- is a tool for assessing progress towards SFM at the national level.

Awareness-raising activities should be designed to suit the varied nature and location of stakeholders. Possible activities include information-sharing and consultative workshops and meetings; the development, production and distribution of publicity materials, such as brochures, flyers, leaflets and posters in the national official and main local languages; development of a Web site and the regular updating of Web-based materials; and radio and television programmes.

One method for initiating the awareness-raising process is a national workshop to launch the Forest Instrument attended by all key stakeholders. For example, the launch workshop organized by the Government of Nigeria (Figure 1) was attended by 64 participants from various stakeholder groups, including the federal ministries of Environment, Health, Trade and Investment and Finance; the National Planning Commission; the Energy Commission;

AWARENESS-RAISING WORKSHOP BANNER AND SOME OF THE PARTICIPANTS, ABUJA, NIGERIA



FIGURE 1

the National Bureau of Statistics; the Millennium Development Goals Office; state forest services; the National Skills Acquisition and Empowerment Programme; national focal points for relevant conventions and protocols; non-governmental organizations (NGOs); academia; the press; and development partners (the European Union, the Economic Community of West African States and FAO). The launch was presided over by the Minister of Environment. Figure 2 is an example of the materials used in Ghana to publicize the Forest Instrument. Figure 3 shows participants at an awareness-raising workshop in Mongolia.

A FLYER FOR GHANA'S AWARENESS-RAISING EFFORTS ON THE FOREST INSTRUMENT

such as the regional and national multi-stakeholder forest fora. The experiences generated and lessons learned in Ghana from the implementation of the Forest Instrument will help other countries to develop similar processes.



What steps will Ghana take to implement the Forest Instrument?

Ghana will utilize existing multi-stakeholder consultation processes to assess the country's strengths and weaknesses with respect to the policy measures agreed in the Forest Instrument. This will also include identifying gaps, i.e. areas that still need special attention. The outcomes of the consultations will serve to identify priority actions needed to ensure sustainable forest management and the appropriate needs for capacity building. In collaboration with development partners Ghana will aim to mobilize the necessary support to implement these actions. The methodology and experiences will be documented and the lessons learnt will be evaluated and shared with other countries.

What outcomes are expected?

The successful implementation of the Forest Instrument Project will enable stakeholders to be well-informed about the challenges of sustainable forest management and the priority actions required to address them. It is envisaged that, through a systematic assessment of its strengths and weaknesses, the setting of priorities and by strengthening the capacity of stakeholders to effectively implement priority actions, Ghana will be in a better position to reduce deforestation and forest degradation and achieve sustainable forest management.

What Roles are there for collaborating Institutions?

The Forestry Commission will lead the process while the FAO provides technical and financial support. Additional in-kind support will be provided by GTZ. The NFP Facility will mainly be involved in facilitating the stakeholder consultation processes. The IUCN, through the Growing Forest Partnership programme will also contribute by involving a larger number of local stakeholders in the consultation processes and by strengthening their capacity to participate in decision making.

Who will benefit from the implementation of the Forest Instrument?

The direct beneficiaries of the project will be the main stakeholders in Ghana's NFP process, including the civil society groups, local communities, the private sector the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the Ghana's Forestry Commission.



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MOVING FORWARD IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NON-LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT ON ALL TYPES OF FOREST:

A Contribution to Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation






FIGURE 2

FIGURE 3



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While the main awareness-raising activities are the responsibility of the lead agency, coverage can be increased by partnering with ongoing initiatives and existing stakeholder platforms to share and distribute publicity materials. In the pilot-project countries, it was found to be useful and cost-effective to work with existing platforms such as NFP-related meetings and the meetings of environmental NGOs, local authorities and others. In Liberia, for example, awareness-raising efforts made use of local forest stakeholder platforms called county forest forums. Another option is to task a few organizations and institutions with awareness-raising on the Forest Instrument as they undertake their own activities. In India, for example, the government engaged the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy to facilitate national awareness-raising activities.

Step 2: Inventory ongoing forestry initiatives and map them against the 25 national policies and measures of the Forest Instrument

Establishing a common understanding among stakeholders of the status of existing NFPs and the implementation of the national forest development framework and plans is a crucial step in the implementation of the Forest Instrument. This is because the Forest Instrument should not be implemented in isolation but as an integral part of ongoing national forest development initiatives. Experience from the pilot projects has shown that very few stakeholders have a comprehensive knowledge of the forest-related activities taking place at the various levels in their countries. Even the lead agencies themselves often do not have full knowledge of the forest-related activities being carried out by other parties.

An inventory exercise is needed, therefore, to collect information on ongoing national and subnational initiatives to support SFM, who is implementing them, where they are being implemented, who is financing them and how they are doing so, and the perceptions of stakeholders on how well the initiatives are being implemented. An important component of the inventory is the mapping of initiatives against the 25 national policies and measures in the Forest Instrument. This provides stakeholders with an overview of the extent to which the individual policies and measures are already covered and by whom, and where the gaps are.

The inventory can be done by, for example:

- inviting representatives of key stakeholders to document and report on their forest-related programmes during stakeholder workshops. This is the approach used by most pilot projects because it is inexpensive and involves stakeholders directly in the inventory process;
- assigning the task to key agencies or forums (e.g. community-based forest management or timber industry associations) to collate information on forest-related initiatives being undertaken by their members and share these during multistakeholder consultative meetings;
- a combination of these two approaches.

What is critical in the choice of approaches is ensuring that the country obtains a comprehensive picture of all forest initiatives as a basis for planning the way forward.

Step 3: Assess the situation against the 25 national policies and measures of the Forest Instrument

Many countries have not assessed the status of their NFPs against the Forest Instrument's 25 national policies and measures. It is important to do so, however, because the Forest Instrument's national policies and measures constitute an internationally agreed, comprehensive set of policies and actions that need to be addressed for a country to achieve SFM. The purpose of this step is to assess where the country stands in relation to the ideals of the Forest Instrument; identify the strengths, weaknesses and gaps of the current programme; identify priority actions; and establish a baseline for monitoring.

The Forest Instrument can be used as a tool or checklist for assessing the comprehensiveness of an NFP by evaluating the extent to which each of the 25 national policies and measures is being implemented. The assessment is based on the inventory of ongoing activities and on stakeholder perceptions of how well each measure has been or is being addressed by the country's ongoing activities. It should be done using multistakeholder participatory processes in order to capture the perceptions and views of all the key stakeholders (e.g. private companies, local authorities, local community institutions, civil society, forest associations and cooperatives, and relevant government institutions) within and outside the forest sector at the national, subnational and local levels. The wider the participation, at all levels, the more relevant will be the outcomes and the greater the sense of ownership of the Forest Instrument there will be among stakeholders. In Liberia, for example, consultations and assessments were held in all the 15 counties and then synthesized at a national workshop to produce a set of national priorities and actions.

Stakeholders should develop and agree on criteria for assessing the status of the NFP against the Forest Instrument's 25 national policies and measures. Box 4 presents an example of a simple scoring system used in pilot-project countries to rate the extent to which national policies and measures were being implemented.

Gaps and weaknesses can be identified based on the results of the evaluation of the extent to which each national policy and measure is being implemented. All those national

SCORING SYSTEM FOR THE EXTENT TO WHICH A COUNTRY IS IMPLEMENTING THE FOREST INSTRUMENT'S 25 NATIONAL POLICIES AND MEASURES

Each national policy and measure is given a score for the extent to which it is being implemented in the country, as follows:

- 0 The policy or measure has not been addressed/is absent from the NFP.
- 1 The policy or measure has just started and there is plenty of room for further attention.
- 2 Action on the policy or measure has been initiated and is progressing well within the NFP process.
- 3 Action on the policy or measure has been carried out to full satisfaction and can serve as a model for others to follow.

In some countries (e.g. Mongolia and Zimbabwe), participants split into working groups to discuss the national policies and measures. Based on the inputs of its members, each working group rated the extent to which each national policy and measure was being implemented (on a scale of 0–3, as above). The working groups then presented their results to the plenary, and consensus was sought. All policies and measures with a score of 0 or 1 were listed on a flipchart and each workshop participant indicated their highest priorities. Those policies and measures that had the highest number of check marks were chosen as priorities.

The assessment can also be done using other methods, as long as they are agreed to by all stakeholders. In Nigeria and Zambia, for example, participants were split into the following stakeholder groups: NGOs, private sector, local authorities and government departments. Each group decided on its top five priorities, using a process in which participants assigned their top five from the list of national policies and measures that had been assessed as 0 or 1. The 4–5 policies and measures nominated with the highest frequency by the stakeholder groups were adopted as the national priorities.

policies and measures with a low score (e.g. 0–1) should be considered to be areas of weakness and gaps (or not relevant for the country), while high scores show the country's strengths and current policy foci. The assessment by stakeholders in Zambia found that 13 of the national policy measures scored 0–1. In Mongolia, one national policy and measure scored 0, 12 scored 1, 11 scored 2 and 1 scored 3. In both countries, the results indicated that many areas were viewed as weak by stakeholders and potentially needed to be addressed if progress was to be made towards SFM. The advantage of the scoring method is that it is simple and cost-effective; it is also a very good way of building consensus. Its main weakness is that it may not be objective because it is dependent on the exposure, knowledge, context and perceptions of participants. That is why it is important for a wide range of stakeholders to participate: it is not so much about absolute numbers as about ensuring that a commonly shared snapshot of the current situation is developed, forming a basis on which all stakeholders can move forward.

Step 4: Identify priority policies and measures

It is possible that a country will identify many weaknesses and gaps, and therefore it will be necessary to identify and agree on priorities for addressing these. This is important because many countries lack the resources and capacity to address every weakness or gap simultaneously. Moreover, from a practical point of view it may be desirable to start with a few critical areas that affect other activities and to take a step-by-step approach. Based on the identified gaps and weaknesses, the consultative multistakeholder platforms should identify and agree on priority policies and measures that require more attention or additional action to improve the country's efforts to achieve SFM. Priorities for additional

action are selected from the list of national policies and measures that are receiving little attention but are considered important for the achievement of SFM. Where there are many gaps and weaknesses, the selection of priority policies and measures can be done through a simple voting process or using a step-wise approach, such as pair-wise ranking. The top 4–5 policies and measures selected from the gaps and weaknesses assessment may be viewed as the priorities. Box 5 lists the priority policies and measures decided by stakeholders in Liberia.

PRIORITY NATIONAL POLICIES AND MEASURES FOR STRENGTHENING FORESTRY IN LIBERIA

Through a prioritization process, participants agreed on five policies and measures that need much more attention in Liberia if the country is to make progress towards SFM. These are, in order of priority:

- support capacity-building among workers and local communities in resource management approaches to reduce pressure on forests (collaborative forest management);
- promote stakeholder participation in the development and implementation of forest-related policies and programmes (e.g. through a forest forum);
- review and strengthen law enforcement;
- promote the efficient utilization of forest products;
- enhance the contribution of forests to poverty reduction and sustainable development.

These priorities reflect the economic importance of forests to the Liberian economy, especially commercial timber harvesting and agroforestry. They also show the importance placed on stakeholder participation and the role played by forests in improving livelihoods.

BOX 5

The approach described above can be used to identify priorities for different geographical regions, stakeholder groups and even genders, which could be useful for the design of targeted projects and programmes. The experiences of the pilot-project countries showed that the priorities selected by the various stakeholders are a function of context and interest. For example, stakeholders in the timber industry often have different priorities to those of local communities living adjacent to protected areas. Figure 4 illustrates the differences in priorities of stakeholder groups at the national and subnational (territorio) levels in Nicaragua; it shows the final set of priorities (país, or country, priorities) arrived at by combining the priorities identified in the 11 subnational consultations with those identified by national-level government and civil-society organizations.

PRIORITIES AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL, AFTER COMBINING THE VIEWS OF NATIONAL AND SUBNATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS IN NICARAGUA

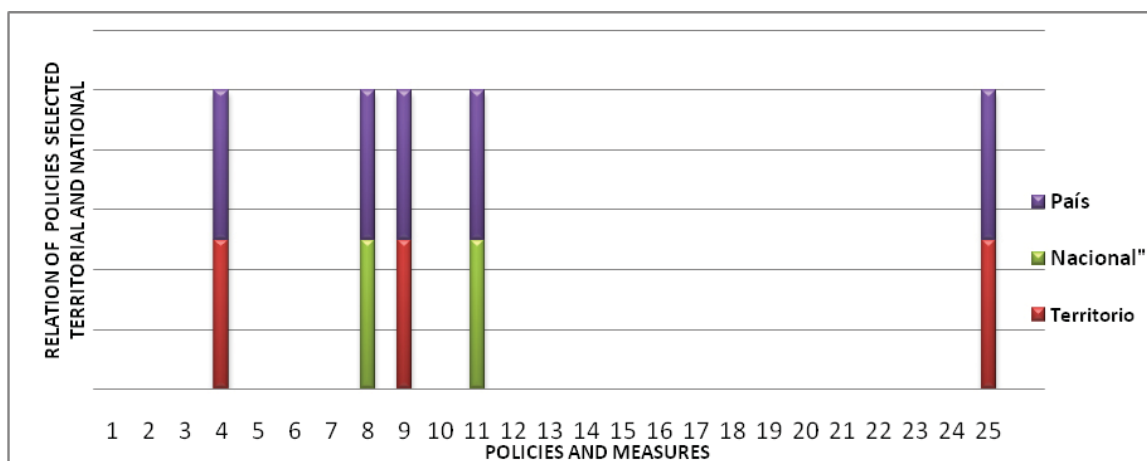


FIGURE 4

Note: *territorio* refers to subnational level; *nacional* are the views expressed at a national stakeholder workshop; and *país* shows the country level after combining the views expressed subnationally and those expressed at the national workshop. See annex for a key to the Forest Instrument's 25 national policies and measures.

Box 6 describes the subnational process in the Philippines.

BOX 6

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS IN THE PHILIPPINES

As part of an NFP process, subnational workshops were conducted to review and assess national policies and measures vis-à-vis those outlined in the Forest Instrument. Key goals of these workshops were to identify major gaps, determine and evaluate national goals with respect to the purposes of the Forest Instrument, and prioritize the national policies and measures to be undertaken to strengthen the implementation of the Forest Instrument as well as the need for support.

Two specialized organizations were engaged to conduct the subnational workshops. The Forestry Development Center (FDC) was contracted to consult with the public sector, primarily government institutions such as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the private sector. The FDC was selected because it is a policy-oriented academic agency with a reputation for objectivity and a long history of policy-related research and studies. The Non-Timber Forest Products Group, an NGO, was tasked with consulting with community-based organizations at the village level and with other civic organizations because of its experience working with these stakeholders.

The FDC-convened workshops were attended by a total of 284 participants, of whom stakeholders from the public sector comprised 81 percent and private-sector representatives about 19 percent. The latter included private forestry corporations; forestry association networks; private plantation owners/tree-growers; manufacturers of handcrafted bags; industrial forestry management agreement holders; wood processors; and the Society of Filipino Foresters.

Table 1 shows the results of assessments in six states in India, in which stakeholders ranked the 25 national policies and measures in accordance with their priorities. National policy/measure 9 (i.e. “mobilizing adequate forest financing from all sources”) was listed as a priority in five of the six states. This reflects a major concern among the states’ forest services, which lack adequate resources for supporting SFM. Table 1 also shows differences in priorities between states, based on their contexts and the status of forests and forest development. In large countries like India, assessments of policies and measures may be best conducted at the subnational level and priorities established at this level rather than trying to develop a consensus on national priorities.

TABLE 1: PRIORITY NATIONAL POLICIES AND MEASURES FOR SIX STATES IN INDIA

Ranking of national policy/measure	State					
	Jammu and Kashmir	West Bengal	Madhya Pradesh	Maharashtra	Tamil Nadu	Arunchal Pradesh
1	9	2	9	14	9	14
2	15	20	11	3	11	15
3	11	22	21	9	7	18
4	5	23	22	18	10	23
5	18	7	8	15	24	9

See annex for a key to the Forest Instrument’s 25 national policies and measures.

Step 5: Develop and implement an action plan

Once stakeholders have identified and agreed on the priority policies and measures, specific activities should be developed for each. It is likely that some activities will already be under way to achieve the priority national policies and measures; it is important, therefore, to clearly identify actions that are still outstanding or that are needed to

address identified gaps and weaknesses. These activities can then be used to develop an action plan for achieving the desired goals. Box 7 lists the key activities for the priority policies and measures in Ghana.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR FOUR PRIORITIZED NATIONAL POLICY MEASURES IN GHANA

- Increase cross-sectoral coordination:
enhancing the visibility of the contribution of the forest sector to gross domestic product and national development.
- Strengthen law enforcement:
enhancing the watch-dog role of civil society.
- Develop financing strategies for SFM:
enhancing access to funding sources by local stakeholders and communities.
- Integrate the NFP into national plans:
enhancing the capacity of district assemblies to develop and implement forest programmes.

BOX 7

The priority actions can be in the form of specific strategies, projects and programmes. To ensure that these actions are properly and efficiently integrated into the national forest development framework, they should be implemented as part of an NFP. This not only ensures cohesion with other ongoing initiatives but also facilitates ownership at the national level by all stakeholders, avoids duplication and increases the efficiency of implementation and monitoring. The development of an action plan is critical because it helps to clearly determine responsibilities and roles, the resources required and where they will come from, and the implementation time frame. An important element in the development of the action plan is the identification of existing forest projects and programmes into which the planned activities can be integrated (Box 8).

INTEGRATING FOREST INSTRUMENT ACTIVITIES INTO EXISTING PROGRAMMES

In Ghana, stakeholders identified several key activities to address each of the four priority areas. Some catalytic activities that focused primarily on building stakeholder capacity were implemented as part of the Forest Instrument pilot project. For the other key activities, the possibility of integrating them with or linking them to relevant ongoing programmes being implemented by other partners, such as REDD+, voluntary partnership agreements (VPAs, part of the European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan) and Growing Forests Partnerships (GFP) was explored. For example, activities in key priority area 1 (promoting cross-sectoral coordination for SFM) were incorporated into the work plan of the GFP. Activities under key priority area 2 (strengthening law enforcement) – to enhance the knowledge of law enforcement agencies of laws applying in the forest sector and those related to increasing the integrity of the forest sector – were incorporated into the VPA work plan. Activities under key priority area 3 (developing effective financial strategies to support SFM) were incorporated into the work plan of REDD+, while activities under key priority area 4 (developing and implementing the NFP and ensuring its integration into national development programmes) were incorporated into the operational plans of district managers in the Forestry Commission and the National Forest Forum.

BOX 8

Step 6: Monitor, evaluate and report

Monitoring and evaluating progress in the implementation of the Forest Instrument will assist stakeholders to:

- continuously assess their progress towards achieving SFM goals and objectives;
- gain a better understanding of the enablers and challenges encountered in implementing the Forest Instrument;
- identify the strengths and weaknesses of the overall NFP or national forest development framework;
- pinpoint areas needing urgent attention;
- have a basis for collaborative and institutional learning;
- maintain accountability to the public about actions taken in relation to implementing the NFP and the Forest Instrument.

Monitoring data will provide the basis for reporting on forest-related activities and achievements to various national and international processes, such as the multilateral environmental conventions and the UNFF. Monitoring and evaluating the Forest Instrument process facilitates the assessment of overall progress towards SFM and the four Global Objectives on Forests.

Baseline

Prior to the implementation of the Forest Instrument activities and processes, it is important to get a good understanding of the current situation, which will form a baseline from which to assess changes arising from implementation. This baseline will be generated in previous steps in the process, especially step 2. The initial inventory of ongoing activities and their mapping against the policies and measures of the Forest Instrument (step 2) and the assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the NFP (step 3) provide fairly good elements of a baseline and can be complemented by quantitative data as available. Where necessary, and depending on the assessment criteria and indicators for measuring change agreed to by stakeholders, baseline data can be collected systematically at the beginning of the implementation of the Forest Instrument activities and processes. Good indicators are needed to measure whether, and to what extent, the objectives and expected results of implementing the Forest Instrument are being achieved within the desired time frame. At the same time, it should be noted that the higher the number of indicators, the greater the effort required and therefore the higher the cost of measurement. It is important, therefore, to develop an optimal number of indicators that will show change at a manageable cost.

Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Forest Instrument should focus on the results and impacts of such implementation rather than on the completion of activities. This implies that the monitoring system and the indicators developed should help measure or determine the extent to which implementation of the Forest Instrument is leading to the achievement of SFM (FAO, 2011).

Linking with existing monitoring and evaluation systems

In most countries, forest-related programmes and initiatives will be under way prior to

the commencement of the Forest Instrument implementation process, and it is likely that a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system will be in place for monitoring progress towards SFM. The approach to monitoring and evaluating progress in implementing the Forest Instrument, therefore, should be integrated with, and implemented through, the existing national forest M&E system. Where possible, such efforts should be harmonized and coordinated with other forest development processes and measures (e.g. REDD+ and VPAs) to avoid duplication and reduce the financial burden of monitoring. At the same time, it is important that, from the beginning, all parties involved in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Forest Instrument have a clear understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities. A *Guide to monitoring and evaluation of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests* (FAO, 2011b) provides a more detailed description of the M&E methodology that countries may use.

In the pilot projects, some countries (e.g. Nicaragua, Box 9, and Liberia, Box 10) developed a system for monitoring the implementation of the Forest Instrument that is integrated into their forestry agency's overall monitoring system.

NICARAGUA'S APPROACH TO MONITORING AND EVALUATING PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE FOREST INSTRUMENT

BOX 9

The main objective of Nicaragua's Forest Instrument M&E system, the SMIF, is to monitor the implementation of the policies and measures of the Forest Instrument and to evaluate their results and impacts. The SMIF has three indicator groups: one covers the five key priority areas, which are proposed to be measured through the criteria and indicators of the NFP and the national Forest and Management Information System (SIAFOR); a second uses other indicators available within SIAFOR to monitor policies and measures not among the five key priorities; and a third evaluates the other policies and measures of the Forest Instrument through analyses performed by forest experts. The SMIF was approved by a steering committee and delivered to the National Forest Institute (INAFOR) for use in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Forest Instrument.

LIBERIA'S APPROACH TO MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOREST INSTRUMENT

BOX 10

Liberia employed a participatory approach to designing the M&E system involving stakeholders and forest communities at the county and national levels. The outcome was an M&E framework template consisting of outcomes, indicators of the outcomes, outputs, a baseline, and sources of information. Stakeholders decided that the M&E of Forest Instrument implementation should focus on results and impacts rather than the completion of activities and outputs. This implies that the M&E system should help determine the extent to which actions related to the implementation of the Forest Instrument by the various stakeholders help in achieving SFM.

The framework was tested in two forest areas – Lofa County and River Gee County. The objective was to determine if the framework was appropriate and realistic for monitoring and evaluating progress in achieving the 25 policies and measures of the Forest Instrument, as well as SFM in general. The testing showed that respondents found the framework to be easy to use and relevant. The Forestry Development Authority (FDA) will be responsible for coordinating, managing and implementing the M&E framework. An M&E unit to be established within the FDA would be responsible for implementing the Forest Instrument's M&E system and integrating it into the FDA's overall M&E framework.



Key achievements, value-added and impact

Raising awareness of the forest sector

The implementation of the Forest Instrument helped raise awareness about, and in some cases the profile of, the forest sector in the pilot-project countries by communicating the contributions of forests to national economies and the environment. In the Philippines, for example, the Forest Instrument implementation team engaged legislators through the Legislative Forum, which aims to build awareness among policy-makers and legislative staff about the values of forests and the environmental services they provide, including the significant roles they play in mitigating climate change. The Forum helped deepen understanding and appreciation among the legislators of the significance of forests and their enormous contributions to socio-economic development in the country. Feedback received from the Forum indicated very strong favourable responses about the need to pursue SFM in the Philippines. The responses of legislators and members of legislative committees in charge of developing legislation directly related to forests have been positive and supportive.

Box 11 describes how implementation of the Forest Instrument raised the profile of the forest sector in Ghana.

RAISING THE PROFILE OF THE FOREST SECTOR IN GHANA

The profile of the forest sector was raised in Ghana through a number of activities. One was a survey of the formal and informal contributions of forests to the economy and livelihoods. The objective of the survey was to enable the Forestry Commission to identify those forest-related goods and environmental services not captured in the national accounting system and to engage the Ghana Statistical Service and the National Development Planning Commission in reviewing and re-assessing the contribution of the forest sector to the gross domestic product in the light of this new information. The methodologies for assessing the importance of forest-related goods and environmental services to the economy and livelihoods were reviewed jointly with representatives of the Ministry of Finance, the National Development Planning Commission and the Ghana Statistical Service. In addition, district assemblies developed forest plans and allocated a portion of community development funds to forest management, which increased the financial support for the forest sector.

BOX 11

Reviewing and strengthening NFPs

Perhaps the most common and significant outcome of and benefit from implementing the Forest Instrument in the pilot-project countries was the review and strengthening of NFPs based on the priority actions developed to address weaknesses and gaps identified in

the assessments. The awareness-raising workshops and status assessments helped improve appreciation among stakeholders of the status of forests and NFPs in their countries. In the Philippines, for example, this awareness and appreciation, which was developed subnationally in the country's various regions, created a significant core of informed stakeholders who became advocates of SFM and were instrumental in supporting the social acceptability of the National Greening Programme and the Moratorium on Timber Harvesting, two flagship forest programmes of government. It also led to the development of a unified framework for SFM (Box 12).

BOX 12

A UNIFIED FRAMEWORK FOR SFM

One of the important accomplishments of the implementation of the Forest Instrument in the Philippines was the development of a unified framework for forest-related programmes, policies and initiatives within the Forest Management Bureau. This initiative sets in place a blueprint for how existing and future forest-related programmes should be organized, and where they fit in the overall SFM framework. The framework is comprehensive and broadly structured so that it is sufficiently flexible and robust to accommodate different programmes, policies and concerns but specific enough to provide details on roles and responsibilities and the formation of forest management units. The framework has enabled the country to maintain an accurate, dynamic database containing: a listing and mapping of forest-sector policies *vis-à-vis* the Forest Instrument; a searchable database for specific policies, by subject; and a searchable database linking the Forest Instrument's 25 policies and measures with relevant forest-sector policies, rules and regulations, administrative orders, regulatory instruments and forest initiatives and to identify thematic and geographic areas that are not being addressed.

In other countries, such as Ghana, Mongolia and Nigeria, the pilot projects on implementing the Forest Instrument came opportunely at a time when their NFPs were due for review and the results of the situation assessments against the 25 national policies and measures of the Forest Instrument helped identify weaknesses and areas to be strengthened. The Forest Instrument proved to be an enabling dialogue and policy framework for the forest sector that enhanced information exchange and strengthened synergies and coordination between forest-related initiatives.

Cross-sectoral collaboration and engagement of a wider range of stakeholders

Another major accomplishment of the implementation of the Forest Instrument was the successful engagement of a wide range of stakeholders from outside the forest sector, who are affected by, or whose actions affect, forest-related activities and policies. Such stakeholders included the judiciary, customs and excise, law enforcement agencies, the military, trade, the energy sector, local government, the finance sector, economic planning, national statistics and the legislature, most of which are not normally seen as having a stake in forests. Their involvement brought new perspectives and led to the identification of new opportunities for strengthening efforts towards SFM. In Nicaragua, for example, engagement with the finance sector led to the development of a forest-financing programme for smallholders in partnership with a finance institution (Box 13).

DEVELOPING AN IMPROVED FOREST CREDIT SCHEME IN NICARAGUA

In Nicaragua, a partnership created between INAFOR and Banco Produzcamos has improved forest financing for smallholders. Under the partnership, a technical team comprising experts from INAFOR, Banco Produzcamos, GIZ and FAO was established to analyse the bank's existing forestry support programme. It found that most credit applications of forest smallholders were rejected because the forest support programme did not cover all activities along the forest value chain. In addition, the personnel of Banco Produzcamos did not have adequate training on the forest support programme, and their knowledge of the forest sector was limited. The analysis led to the integration of new forest activities into the forest support programme based on the value chain. One of the most important aspects of the partnership was to strengthen the capacity of bank personnel to manage the new forest support programme. A forest catalogue was also created to function as a handbook to complement staff knowledge.

Integrating forests into national development plans

The pilot implementation of the Forest Instrument helped to articulate and demonstrate the contribution of forests to national economies, including by supporting other sectors, such as agriculture and food security, energy, tourism and water. As a result, some countries, such as Ghana and Uganda, identified forestry as one of the drivers of economic growth in their recent five-year national development plans.





Lessons learned

Raising awareness and knowledge of the Forest Instrument among a wide range of stakeholders at the national, subnational and local levels and giving those stakeholders an opportunity to assess their country's NFP against the agreed policies and measures of the Forest Instrument are the most critical components of Forest Instrument implementation. In the pilot projects, countries used the Forest Instrument as a checklist and an overarching forest policy framework against which they could gauge how well their own current policies and programmes covered the key elements and requirements for achieving SFM.

The use of multistakeholder dialogue platforms for soliciting the views and contributions of stakeholders from different sectors is critical for opening up new opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration and linkages with forest-related activities outside the forest sector. This can help leverage additional resources for implementing SFM.

Implementing the Forest Instrument using a step-by-step approach, starting with a few priority areas and progressively monitoring progress and impacts, allows implementation to be tailored to priority needs and available resources. It also provides countries with an informed basis on which to undertake regular reviews and to target their actions at key gaps and weaknesses. The key lessons learned are as follows:

- Awareness-raising is a critical step, because most stakeholders are unfamiliar with the Forest Instrument, how it relates to ongoing national forest development, and the potential added value of its implementation.
- The assessment of ongoing activities provides a reality check on how stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of NFPs in their country.
- Political commitment is important for the process. This can be secured by presenting concrete results that clearly demonstrate the value and contributions of forests to the attainment of national development goals.
- The actions to be implemented under each priority policy and measure should be those most likely to contribute to the advancement of SFM in the country, or in specific areas of the country.
- Priorities may vary within a country, and decisions on national priorities should be based on actions that will contribute most to achieving SFM at the national level. Subnational priorities are best served by their integration into subnational plans.
- The implementation of the Forest Instrument should be integrated into, and be part of, NFPs. Wherever they exist, NFP platforms or similar arrangements are useful mechanisms for stakeholder dialogues and discussions.
- The implementation of the Forest Instrument is useful for strengthening the comprehensiveness and cohesion of NFPs and processes in a country by involving all stakeholders.
- Implementing the Forest Instrument and monitoring progress promotes transparency and accountability in the forest sector.

- The implementation of the Forest Instrument has significant potential for leveraging support and additional resources from ongoing activities as well as from stakeholders and other sectors.
- Many developing countries and countries with economies in transition are willing and ready to implement the Forest Instrument but lack resources and know-how.
- The implementation of awareness-raising activities can generate expectations, including for additional resources, and there is a risk of frustrating stakeholders if these are not met.
- The 25 national policies and measures specified in the Forest Instrument reflect the sector as a whole and assessment of progress towards them provides a useful overview of successes and achievements as well as current challenges and priorities for action. For this reason, monitoring and evaluating the Forest Instrument is a critical component of implementation.



STRENGTHENING NATIONAL REPORTING IN SUPPORT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NON-LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT ON ALL TYPES OF FORESTS



Recommendations

For countries interested in implementing the Forest Instrument

- Make the Forest Instrument known among a wide range of key stakeholders within and outside the forest sector.
- Use multistakeholder dialogue platforms to exchange views and review current status, and for prioritization and implementation.
- Identify a lead agency to champion the process, which should be open and willing to maintain communication with stakeholders in a transparent manner.
- Secure political commitment at the highest level by presenting concrete results that clearly demonstrate the value and contribution of forests to the attainment of national development goals (i.e. show its relevance).
- Start implementation by focusing on a few priority actions that suit available resources and show early results (“low-hanging fruit”). This will motivate stakeholders to continue with the implementation process.
- Integrate the implementation of Forest Instrument activities with NFPs and build on ongoing activities to ensure cohesion and maximize the potential for leveraging additional resources.

For development partners interested in supporting countries in the implementation of the Forest Instrument

- Provide financial and technical support for catalytic activities based on the prioritized actions to initiate implementation beyond planning, and help leverage both domestic resources and foreign financing. Initiating the implementation of the Forest Instrument requires only modest funds and technical support.
- Facilitate integration with other ongoing programmes to leverage additional resources.
- Ensure that stakeholders see how action and activities under the Forest Instrument address their needs. The process should be country-driven and locally owned.

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Annex

National policies and measures of the Forest Instrument (abridged version)

1. Develop and implement NFPs or similar strategies for SFM and integrate them into strategies for sustainable development, including poverty-reduction strategies.
2. Consider the seven thematic elements of SFM and identify specific environmental and other forest-related aspects within those elements for consideration as criteria and indicators for SFM.
3. Promote the use of management tools to assess the environmental impact of projects affecting forests, and promote good environmental practices.
4. Develop and implement policies that encourage SFM to provide a wide range of goods and services and to contribute to poverty reduction and the development of rural communities.
5. Promote the efficient production and processing of forest products.
6. Support the protection and use of traditional forest-related knowledge and practices, including the fair and equitable sharing of benefits.
7. Further develop and implement criteria and indicators for SFM.
8. Create enabling environments for investment by the private sector, communities and other forest stakeholders.
9. Develop financing strategies, taking into account all possible funding sources.
10. Encourage the recognition of the range of values from forests and ways to reflect such values in the marketplace.
11. Enhance cross-sectoral policy and programme coordination to integrate the forest sector into national decision-making processes.
12. Integrate NFPs or other strategies of SFM into national sustainable development strategies, such as poverty-reduction strategies.
13. Establish and strengthen partnerships and joint programmes with stakeholders.
14. Review and improve forest legislation, strengthen forest law enforcement and promote good governance.
15. Address threats to forest health and vitality from natural disasters and human activities.
16. Develop, expand and maintain networks of protected forest areas.
17. Assess the conditions and management effectiveness of existing protected areas.
18. Strengthen the contribution of science and research in advancing SFM, and incorporate scientific expertise into forest policies and programmes.
19. Promote the development and application of scientific and technological innovations, including for local communities.

- 20.Strengthen public understanding of the importance and benefits of forests and SFM.
- 21.Promote access to and support formal and informal education, extension and training for the implementation of SFM.
- 22.Support education, training and extension programmes involving local and indigenous communities, forest workers and forest owners to develop forest management approaches that reduce pressure on forests.
- 23.Promote the active and effective participation of major groups, local communities, forest owners and other relevant stakeholders in the development, implementation and assessment of forest-related national policies, measures and programmes.
- 24.Encourage the private sector and civil-society organizations to implement voluntary instruments such as certification, promote products from sustainably managed forests and improve market transparency.
- 25.Enhance access by households, small-scale forest owners and communities to forest resources and markets.

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