

PROFOR – an overview

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The Program on Forests (PROFOR) is a multidonor partnership for enhancing forests' contribution to poverty reduction, sustainable development and protection of environmental services through the implementation of national forest programmes (NFPs) or equivalent forest policy processes. PROFOR seeks to encourage the transition to a more socially and environmentally sustainable forest sector supported by sound policies and institutions that take a holistic approach to forest conservation and management.

Initially established in 1997 at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), PROFOR relocated to the World Bank in 2002. PROFOR covers projects in four thematic areas:

- **A livelihoods approach to poverty reduction** – increasing forests' contribution to the livelihoods of the rural poor through employment and income creation;
- **Forest governance** – improving decision-making processes as well as regulatory and institutional frameworks, e.g. for better enforcement of regulations, improved incentives and enhanced transparency and accountability;
- **Innovative approaches to financing sustainable forest management** – identifying market incentives that promote sustainable forest management, reforming forest revenue collection systems and developing markets and compensation mechanisms for forest environmental services;
- **Cross-sectoral cooperation for positive forest outcomes** – improving understanding of how macro policy reforms and actions in other sectors affect forests, and devising ways to minimize

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or offset potential negative impacts and increase positive outcomes.

PROFOR gives special emphasis to projects with high potential for providing lessons and knowledge gains that are transferable and relevant to a wide range of situations.

Since 2002, the PROFOR portfolio has included 35 diverse activities, implemented at the global, regional and national levels and frequently implemented in partnership with other national and international organizations. Some examples:

Poverty-Forests Toolkit. The Poverty-Forests Toolkit helps identify and document how forests contribute to livelihoods in order to make a stronger case for forests within national development agendas and integrate national forest programmes in poverty reduction strategies. Developed in partnership with the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and Winrock International, the toolkit builds on knowledge generated through case studies carried out in Guinea, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Laos, Mexico, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania to assess how locally and sustainably managed forests enhance rural livelihoods and conserve biodiversity.

Forest Investment Fora. PROFOR has spearheaded a series of fora designed to encourage international financing agencies, private-sector investors, industry and civil society to identify opportunities for investments in environmentally and socially sustainable forestry. A global forum in 2002 launched this series, resulting in demand for subsequent regional and national fora. Most recently, a forum was held for eastern and southern Africa in June 2006. It focused on land tenure reform in support of community forest ownership, measures to increase transparency in forest resource allocation, market mechanisms such as forest certification and proof of legality, and payments for environmental services. The Forum also considered means to encourage company-community partnerships and small- and medium-scale forest-based enterprises.

Support to national forest sector reform

in China. China's New Countryside Strategy calls for increased assistance to rural areas and policies more favourable for the rural poor. To enable the forest sector to contribute to this strategy, China is committed to reforming collective forest areas. Hence it must reform the institutional setting and policy framework to improve tenure rights for rural farmers and enhance forest-based livelihoods. PROFOR is helping this process by supporting analyses of the forest tenure system and policies needed to implement tenure reform – through surveys of existing forest land tenure and management practices at the household and village levels, comparative analysis of forest business models to determine best practices for rural community welfare, and identification of policy and regulatory reforms needed to improve forest producers' performance.

Land administration in Brazil. With a view to supporting improved land management in the Brazilian Amazon, PROFOR is supporting an assessment of how land rights are signalled, adjudicated, documented and enforced along the forest-agriculture frontier. The analysis will look at the complex interactions of different formal and informal stakeholders through case studies in four states of Brazil. The findings will also be of relevance for land management issues in neighbouring Amazon Basin countries.

Easing institutional change. PROFOR has helped to inform the institutional reform process in the Russian Federation by supporting dialogue on key issues such as concession systems and fire management. In Honduras, PROFOR has promoted dialogue with countries that have undertaken land tenure, institutional, industrial and market reforms to assist policy-makers facing challenging choices.

For more information...

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