

National forest programmes

From political concept to practical instrument in developing countries



NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMMES

**From political concept to practical instrument in
developing countries**

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Foreword

The concept of national forest programmes as described in this paper has a long history. Although nearly all countries have always drawn up plans for their forests, it is only since 1985 (with the introduction of National Forest Action Plans (NFAPs)) that attempts have been made to somehow standardise the way national plans are formulated and to use them to ensure the integration and funding of projects. Criteria and norms were drawn up at the initiative of a number of donors, international development banks, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and United Nations organisations. Although the formulation and implementation of NFAPs took place with varying degrees of success, they provided the basis for a new approach adopted at the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF). The Panel agreed that every country in the world should formulate a national forest programme for all types of forest. The initial emphasis on tropical forests and developing countries was replaced by concern for all forests; the somewhat rigid NFAP framework was abandoned in favour of a policy and planning process that could be elaborated in such a way as to better suit a country's own choices, with due consideration for the basic principles agreed upon at the IPF.

This paper will deal in detail with the concept of national forest programmes, as defined in the IPF; it will examine the basic principles of such programmes, and will attempt to clarify them. The results (successful or otherwise) of earlier planning processes in developing countries will be reviewed, given that these can provide important lessons for the further operationalisation of the new nfp concept. This experience is further complemented and illustrated in Annex II by a number of personal impressions, described by Dutch colleagues, of earlier processes in which they were involved. Although this experience, and the lessons drawn from it, is largely based on policy and planning processes in developing countries, it is often equally relevant to other countries.

This document has been written at the request of the Directorate General of International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS). It is primarily intended to provide background for Dutch civil servants concerned with nfp matters. However, it may also be relevant to all those interested in the subject. In collaboration with the DGIS Environment and Development Department (DGIS-DML), the DGIS Rural and Urban Development Department (DGIS-DRU) and the International Agricultural Centre (IAC), we at the National Reference Centre for Nature Management (EC LNV, formerly IKC Natuurbeheer) hope to contribute to a better understanding and thus a broader application of the new concept of nfp's.

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¹ The Support Group on Forests, Forestry and Biological Diversity is a body in which forest experts from the IAC and Expertisecentrum LNV (formerly IKC Natuurbeheer) collaborate.

List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank	MIRENEM	Ministerio de Recursos Naturales, Energía y Minas (Ministry of Natural Resources, energy and Mines)
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity	NCS	National Conservation Strategy
CCD	Convention on Combating Desertification	NEAP	National Environmental Action Programmes
CCAB	Comisión Centroamericana de Bosques (Central American Forest Commission)	NFAP	National Forest Action Plan
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research	Nfp	National forest programme
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
COFO	Commission on Forestry	NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
CONAF	Corporación Nacional Forestal (National Forest Corporation)	NWFP	North-West Frontier Province
CONPES	National Commission for Economic and Social Programmes	ODA (1)	Official Development Aid
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development	ODA (2)	Overseas Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development	PAFBol	Plan de Acción Forestal para Bolivia (National Forestry Action Plan for Bolivia)
DGIS	Directorate General International Co-operation	PAFC	Plan de Acción Forestal para Colombia (National Forestry Action Plan for Colombia)
DNP	Departamento Nacional de Planificación (National Planning Department)	PAFCA	Plan de Acción Forestal para Centro America (Forestry Action Plan for Central America)
DPCSD	Department for Policy Co-ordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat	PAFCHILE	Plan de Acción Forestal para Chile (National Forestry Action Plan Chile)
FAG	Forestry Advisers Group	PAFCR	Plan de Acción Forestal de Costa Rica
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations	PAFCV	Plan de Acção Forestal de Cabo Verde (Forestry Action Plan for Cabo Verde)
FCCC	Framework Convention on Climate Change	PAFE	Plan de Acción Forestal para Ecuador)
FINNIDA	Finnish International Development Agency	PAFG	Plan de Acción Forestal de Guatemala
FMP	Forestry Master Plan	PAFN	Plan de Acción Forestal National (National Forestry Action Plan)
FPA	Forest Partnership Agreement)	PAFR	Plan d'Action Forestier Régional
F(S)MP	Forestry (Sector) Master Plans	PAFS	Plan d'Action Forestier du Sénégal
FSR	Forestry Sector Reviews	PAN/LCD	Programme National d'Action de Lutte Contre la Desertification
FYIP	Five-Year Implementation Plan	PDR1	Plan de Développement Regional Integral
GEF	Global Environment Facility	PNFR	Programme National de Foresterie Rurale
IBD	Inter-American Development Bank	SECTEC	Technical Secretariat
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development	SLFSMP	Sri Lanka Forestry Sector Master Plan
IFF	Intergovernmental Forum on Forests	SUFOREN	Sub-secretariat for Natural Resources
IGF	Inspector General of Forests	TFAP	Tropical Forests Action Programme
INEFAN	Instituto Nacional Ecuatoriano de Fauna y Areas Naturales (National Institute of Ecuador for Forests, Natural Areas and Wildlife)	TCP	Technical Co-operation Programme
IPF	Intergovernmental Panel on Forests	UN	United Nations
ITFF	Interagency Task Force on Forests	UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organisation	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
JICA	Japan International Co-operation Agency	UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
LNV	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries	UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
		WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
		WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
		ZFAP	Zambia Forestry Action Programme

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED 1992) in Rio de Janeiro did not result in endorsement of a world-wide convention on forests. However, its findings and recommendations did result in the *Non-legally binding Forest Principles. Agenda 21* turned out to be a sound enough basis to continue international discussions in order to reach further global agreement on forests and their sustainable management. For this purpose the *Intergovernmental Panel on Forests* (IPF) was established under the auspices of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD). This has since produced a large number of agreements to enhance the sustainable protection and management of all types of forests world-wide. These agreements have been laid down in the *IPF Proposals for Action (UN-CSD, 1997)*. In addition, several courses of action related to forests have been agreed on under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and other conventions, such as that on Combating Desertification and CITES.

Much of the proposed action on forests is to take place in the individual countries concerned. *National forest programmes* (nfp) are regarded as an extremely important instrument in operationalising the *Proposals for Action* and other internationally agreed obligations at the level of individual countries. In principle, any type of national forest policy and planning process may be considered to be an nfp. In actual fact, however, forest policy and planning processes differ enormously from one country to the next as regards content, process, institutional positioning and political support. However, the IPF has defined the nfp concept as a number of general principles and elements which, at the very least, should be taken into account when formulating and operationalising national policies, plans and planning processes. As one of the priorities for action, the IPF requested *all countries*, both in the tropical, temperate and boreal zones, to develop or adjust their current national forest policy and planning frameworks to conform with the nfp concept as formulated within the IPF. It is explicitly emphasised that it is countries themselves that are primary responsible for their own processes, taking into account their specific circumstances and sovereignty.

Just how individual countries will proceed with their national policy and planning in the light of the IPF Proposals is a major question. Although the nfp concept has been defined within the IPF, this has only been done in general terms –it is a product of consensus acceptable to all the countries involved. A dilemma presents itself, however: there is, on the one hand, a need to further elaborate the general nfp concept, while, on the other, countries do not wish to be straitjacketed as to how they should do so. This problem has been widely recognised. The *Intergovernmental Forum on Forests* (IFF, the successor to the IPF) has been given the task of developing additional proposals for the practical design of the nfp concept and for how countries can be supported in implementing their national policies and plans and reinforcing their forest sector. Several initiatives have already been undertaken in this area, both in the North and the South (see chapter 5).

One should bear in mind that the nfp concept is not entirely new. In fact, the majority of countries already have some form of national forest policy and planning. National Forest Action Plans (NFAPs) have been developed and implemented in the tropics and subtropics since 1985, particularly in developing countries, as part of the TFAP (Tropical Forestry Action Plan; later Tropical Forests Action Programmes) process, albeit in vastly differing ways and with varying degrees of success. Support for the TFAP/NFAP process has been provided for many years both internationally and as part of the Development Co-operation policy of the Netherlands. Several developing countries have used other types of planning framework, such as *Forestry Master Plans* and *Forest Sector Reviews*. In the temperate zone, too, there is great diversity in national policy and planning regimes within individual countries.

The large body of experience gained in all these processes has had a major influence on the nfp concept as defined by the IPF. In practice, the formulation of nfp's in the light of IPF Proposals for Action will often involve building on, adapting and revitalising existing policy and planning processes. The experience derived from the various processes therefore provides valuable lessons for the successful operationalisation of the new nfp concept.

Dutch development co-operation policy on forests

Dutch development policy on forests makes it a priority to support developing countries in establishing and reinforcing their policy and planning processes. In the past, the Netherlands has provided a great deal of support where forests are concerned, especially within the framework of TFAP/NFAP.

The Netherlands has endorsed the *IPF Proposals for Action* and is willing to promote their implementation. Current Dutch development assistance policy places a great deal of emphasis on an integrated sectoral approach and on the importance of development assistance being driven by the requirements of the country concerned and by national policies. The concept of an nfp as defined in the IPF links up well with this approach. In view of the importance given to the nfp concept within international and Dutch forest policy, it is essential to fully understand its scope, contents and potential. It is also necessary to be well informed about current thinking and developments in this field in order to determine how Dutch policy can most effectively anticipate them.

Dutch bilateral development co-operation has for some time been largely delegated to embassies. Nfp's can form an important framework for defining and prioritising ambassadorial forest and biodiversity policies and programmes, including direct support to assist countries in developing their nfp's.

Aims, focus and structure of this paper

The general aim of this paper is to provide highly relevant, up-to-date information on nfp's to all those involved in formulating policy or in implementing national forest planning in developing countries. The paper is specifically targeted at embassies, so as to assist them in determining how they can deal most effectively with new or ongoing nfp processes in the country where they are located. Hence, the paper focuses primarily on planning processes and prior experience in developing countries. Planning processes and initiatives in other countries and regions are touched on only occasionally.

Chapter 2 begins with the "why's" and "wherefore's" of the nfp concept: Where does the idea come from, what has been agreed internationally about its aims, content and form, and what basic assumptions have been made? How and under what conditions can the broad nfp concept contribute effectively to improved protection and management of forests and to the implementation of IPF Proposals in developing countries?

Chapter 3 briefly explains the most important earlier planning concepts and processes in developing countries. Some results and lessons from the past are reviewed in Chapter 4. The questions dealt with include: What were the strengths and weaknesses both conceptually and operationally; what were the main factors which enabled national forest planning to succeed in some countries while in others it barely managed to get off the ground (success and failure factors)?

Chapter 5 briefly reviews recent developments and initiatives in getting the new nfp concept started and implemented in various countries.

Finally, Chapter 6 briefly discusses some suggestions as to how support can be provided for the development and implementation of nfp's within the framework of Dutch development co-operation.

This document is primarily an *information document* and describes the existing situation and current insights. Developments with respect to nfp's are dynamic. Substantial changes can be expected during the next few years as a result of experience gained and of new insights and agreements. Reports will be provided on these developments in the form of periodic information updates. Some useful sources of up-to-date information about nfp's are given in Annex 1.

2. NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMMES (NFP's)

The main aim of this section is to define the concept of the national forest programme (nfp) as developed during the UNCED follow-up process. The context, aims, definition and content of the concept will be reviewed and its potential significance, strengths and weaknesses will be discussed.

2.1 Context

Over the past few years, discussions on national forest programmes have taken place primarily within the framework of implementation of the UNCED proposals. During UNCED (in 1992), a large number of basic principles and actions were defined in *Agenda 21* and in the “*Forest Principles*” in order to combat deforestation and enhance sustainable forest protection and management. In addition the *Convention on Biological Diversity* and the *Framework Convention on Climate Change* were adopted; these include several agreements and courses of action relating to forests. However, little consensus was reached on the manner in which such actions should be implemented in actual practice. In 1995, the *Commission on Sustainable Development* (CSD), –set up to monitor and foster implementation of the UNCED plans (Agenda 21)– subsequently established the *Intergovernmental Panel on Forests* (IPF), whose remit it was to formulate measures –on a consensus basis– to be taken, at both national and international levels, to achieve sustainable forest management. This led to *the IPF Proposals for Action*; these encompass approximately 130 courses of action, a large number of which are to be taken up at national level. The IPF Proposals were endorsed at the Fifth Session of the CSD in April 1997, later at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) in June 1997, and most recently in February 1999 by the Commission on Forestry (COFO) of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), as the framework for further action on forests.

To enhance the operationalisation and implementation of the IPF Proposals for Action and the agreed forest-related action incorporated in other international agreements and conventions at country level, the IPF introduced the concept of national forest programmes (nfp's). From the outset, the IPF has always stressed that responsibility for designing and implementing these national processes primarily lies with countries themselves. At the same time, it was argued that national forest plans should not be established in isolation but should have a certain degree of international coherence and co-ordination in view of the global dimensions and inter-relationships of sustainable forest management. It was also observed that although many countries already practice some form of national forest planning (NFAPs, Forestry Master Plans, Forestry Sector Reviews, National Environmental Action Programmes (NEAP's) etc.), the nature, scope, context and impact of these plans often differ very considerably and usually need to be adjusted in order to form an effective conceptual and operational framework for implementing the IPF's Proposals for Action, and for promoting sustainable forest management². Hence, there have been intensive discussions within the IPF on what form such policies, plans and processes should take. Experience of past and current processes has played an important role in these discussions. During all the discussions, however, it was also apparent that many countries are in fact strongly opposed to any outside body prescribing the form their forest planning should take. Despite major differences of opinion with regard to the precise content, consensus was eventually reached on the general policy and planning framework, which includes a number of common features or “principles” which national forest programmes should comply with (as a minimum), irrespective of the form chosen or the type of forest concerned. These principles have been formulated in the general concept of “national forest programme (nfp)”.

² It has become apparent, moreover, that in recent years a large number of planning processes have been developed, often resulting in parallel, poorly co-ordinated and inefficient activities within one and the same country.

2.2 What are nfp's?³

2.2.1 Definition

The IPF has deliberately chosen to give an extremely broad definition of nfp's⁴. Nfp's are: "comprehensive forest policy frameworks" aimed at achieving sustainable forest management at national level. The term "national forest programme" is defined as a "generic expression for a wide range of approaches for policy, planning and implementation" at national and sub-national level. Countries should choose their own approach; nfp's should be implemented in the context of each country's socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental situation. In principle, this means that any kind of national forest planning can be seen as an nfp. However, the IPF insists that the general *principles* and *elements* as described in 2.2.2 below should be observed during implementation and that nfp's require a broad intersectoral and participatory approach at every stage from policy formulation, strategies, action plans and programmes to implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Nfp's should build upon existing policy and planning processes and be integrated into wider programmes for sustainable land use, in accordance with chapters 10 to 15 of Agenda 21 and other international conventions and arrangements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on Combating Desertification (CCD) and the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC). Programmes of action should be properly co-ordinated with activities in other sectors, for example agriculture, energy and industry (§ 8).

2.2.2 Principles

Nfp's should be seen as long-term, iterative *processes* (§10); an nfp is a cyclic, continuous process of policy development, planning, implementation, periodic monitoring and evaluation, and should be constantly reviewed in response to changing circumstances and newly acquired knowledge and experience.

The IPF recommends two sets of "elements" with which the over-all nfp process should comply. These can be regarded general principles of policy.

Firstly, the following set of 5 "key elements" should be recognised, regardless of the specific approach adopted by individual countries (§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.

Secondly, a number of "specific elements" need to be considered in developing and implementing nfp's (§9);

- appropriate participatory mechanisms in which all interested parties are involved;
- decentralisation (where applicable);
- 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;
- securing land tenure arrangements; and
- establishing effective co-ordination mechanisms and conflict-resolution schemes.

³ Unless otherwise stated, this section is based on UN-CSD (1997); when relevant, reference is made between brackets to the relevant paragraph of this document: ((§...)).

⁴ In the IPF document, nfp is printed (for political reasons) in lower case. This is in order to prevent confusion with the earlier definition of NFAP concepts used by the FAO, thus emphasising that national planning processes can take many different forms (see also chapter 3).

In addition to the principles set out above, some points are specifically emphasised to be considered when elaborating nfp's:

- nfp's should be based on an ecosystem approach, one which combines conservation of biological diversity with the sustainable use of biological resources (§17a);
- nfp's should be based on the sound economic valuation of forest resources, including environmental services and non-timber forest products (§11);
- nfp's can provide a framework within which strategic and operational planning can be effectively linked (§11);
- there is a need to encourage an external economic and commercial environment that is supportive of nfp's (§12);
- in several cases nfp's will need to be internationally funded. It is stated that recipient countries can greatly facilitate the mobilisation of funds by efficient implementation of (investment) policies and by a demonstrable commitment to the nfp process (§13),
- it is important to reinforce institutional capacity at all levels and in all forest-related sectors (§14),
- it is essential to improve regional and international co-operation for the exchange of information, technology and know-how and establishing appropriate networks to support national forest programmes (§16).

2.2.3 Nfp action proposals

The following proposals for action on nfp's were adopted at the IPF. These proposals were formally endorsed during the Fifth Session of the CSD:

- Firstly, all countries are encouraged to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate their own national forest programmes, based on the IPF nfp concept. It is explicitly emphasised that it is countries themselves which are responsible for the actual design of the process, in accordance with the specific conditions, sovereignty and national legislation in the particular country (§17a);
- The IPF calls for improved international co-operation in support of the forest sector, urging countries to use nfp's, as appropriate, as a basis for such co-operation (§17b).
- In this respect, the need for more funds and the development of additional and innovative financing is emphasised (§17c).
- Countries are encouraged to elaborate suitable criteria and indicators for forest management and to integrate them into the overall nfp process (§17d); mechanisms should be developed to guarantee the linking of results of multidisciplinary research into all stages of the nfp cycle (§17e).
- Countries are requested to develop management systems which guarantee the participation of indigenous populations, forest dwellers, forest owners and local communities in the nfp process, as well as meaningful decision-making regarding the management of state forest lands in their proximity (§17f).
- Countries are encouraged to incorporate capacity-building as an objective of nfp's, paying particular attention to training, extension services, transfer of technology and financial assistance, taking due account of traditional local forest-related knowledge (§17g).
- Finally, countries are requested to establish sound national mechanisms for co-ordination (§17h) and to develop partnerships (national and international), which include "partnership agreements" (§17i), to promote the implementation of nfp's.

2.2.4 General Nfp components and policy instruments

According to the IPF definition, the nfp concept serves as a framework for the process of integral policy-making and institutional development, as well as for their implementation through programmes and projects; the nfp is also meant to be a framework for national and international co-ordination and dialogue and donor support and donor co-ordination. To achieve this, an nfp should probably include the following general components (Liss 1998):

- a sector review and a process for policy and institutional reform;
- an investment programme;
- a capacity building programme;

- co-ordination.

As a fifth component, a programme for monitoring and evaluation can be added.

Liss (1998), interpreting the IPF Proposals for the nfp process, also mentions the following relevant policy instruments:

- National Forest Statement;
- Forest Sector Review;
- Identification of key issues and priorities;
- Forest policy formulation;
- Strategy development;
- Plan of Action for one planning cycle (e.g. 5 years) integrated into the national planning framework;
- Plan of investment for the public sector;
- National and International Partnership Agreements.

2.3 Significance

The nfp concept, as defined in the IPF, is an overall concept that includes policy making and strategic and operational planning, and which attempts to link them. A participatory and decentralised planning approach is implicitly emphasised. An nfp should be a democratic (operational) policy framework to encourage sustainable forest management and implementation of the IPF Proposals for Action and other internationally agreed obligations on forests at country level.

Within the IPF, the term “nfp” was consciously formulated as a generic concept and not as a methodology with a “Book of Rules”. This was done recognising on the one hand that national processes may take many appropriate forms, and on the other hand realising that many countries wish to assert their own sovereignty. The nfp concept can be seen as an umbrella term – a product of consensus– to which all participating countries can agree.

Added value and limitations

What is the potential added value of the new nfp concept when compared with the planning concepts so far employed in the various countries? Is there really a better basis now for successful national forest policy development and planning than previously?

One important advantage is that there is now just one generally defined nfp concept which the IPF has decided all national processes should comply with. Furthermore, the IPF Proposals for Action and the nfp principles apply to *all types of forest*. *All countries* are explicitly called upon to review their own processes in the light of the new nfp concept and to adjust them if necessary. Since this has been agreed at IPF-CSD level, it seems that there is now indeed sufficient international political support for actually carrying out such reviews and adjustments. Although this has not been laid down in a “hard” treaty, the agreements within the IPF certainly imply a heavy political obligation⁵.

The new nfp concept has created a higher degree of reciprocity and equity between the developing and the rich countries than was the case, for example, within the earlier TFAP/NFAP; this was only aimed at improving forest planning in developing countries in the tropics. In this respect the formulation of the new nfp concept is definitely a break with the past; indeed, the nfp concept should not be seen as merely a continuation of the TFAP. A major difference between nfp’s and past concepts, for instance NFAPs, is that the nfp concept places much greater emphasis on the forest *policy* process, rather than just on products (including written ones) or plans. Furthermore, the nfp concept makes much more reference to international conventions and agreements related to forests (CBD, CCD, FCCC, CITES, etc) and to the need to integrate them.

⁵ The IPF Proposals for Action have now been endorsed by the most important international bodies and forums as the framework for further international action on forests, for example CSD, Earth Summit +5 (UNGASS), ECOSOC, COFO, World Forestry Congress, ITTC, G8 Summit, COP of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe.

Although earlier processes already emphasised the need for harmonisation and integration of forest programmes within the existing frameworks of policy development, planning, and national development plans (which had already been accepted by some countries), another advantage of the IPF process and the nfp concept is that they are more consistent in their formulation and that international consensus exists on their content. The IPF process has also ensured that forests and forestry development have been better positioned –conceptually– within the broader context of the environment and of sustainable development and that a number of principles have been established for that purpose.

However, a major problem with the nfp concept –as now defined in the IPF– is that it is rather open and broad; it is essentially a normative and political concept, a generic concept which leaves much room for interpretation. The IPF Proposals give hardly any indications of how the various actions can be made more concrete, and with what facilities, methods and financing. Furthermore, the nfp definition does not provide clear indicators to determine when a process is in fact an nfp. That is an advantage, since it allows for flexibility (country-specific process), but also a disadvantage, since it does not set out clear international guidelines for “quality control”. This requires taking a certain risk in embarking on a process that does not allow a framework to be set for measuring the results a priori, but only from the specific experience gained within the process. The achievement of consensus on the principles to be applied and the formulation of process indicators are therefore of key importance. This is also very different to traditional planning activities.

One major question is whether, and how, the various countries will steer their individual nfp processes in the light of the present and in many ways open formulation of the IPF Proposals and the nfp concept. There seems to be a clear need for further guidance and support for their elaboration at national level. This problem has been recognised at the IPF and it was emphasised that it would be valuable to test and demonstrate the nfp concept on an operational scale (IPF-CSD, 1997, §10). The dilemma which becomes apparent is that countries do not accept any dictates and are primarily to be responsible for their own process, whereas international (financial) aid will be indispensable in many cases. The real challenge is therefore that of how to model the elaboration and support processes effectively. Here, the experience gained world-wide with past and present policy and planning processes can provide very valuable lessons.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the discussions regarding nfp’s and the agreements reached within the IPF process have created a positive momentum and a willingness in many countries to embark upon further national initiatives in this area. It is still rather unclear, however, in what direction these actions will develop and what will actually be their added value in terms of increased attention, better policy, improved planning and effective forest management. Much will depend on the extent to which countries are actually prepared to give the forest sector a higher status, whether more funding is made available, and if countries are willing to embark on an open learning process in which policy, planning and implementation are linked more effectively.

3. PAST AND PRESENT FOREST PLANNING PROCESSES

This section describes the most important planning processes currently and recently applied in developing countries.

3.1 Introduction

The importance of sound policy, planning and co-ordination as the foundation for forestry development and sustainable forest management has been sufficiently recognised, including in the past. All countries, rich or poor, have had some kind of forest planning, although the nature, quality and scope may have varied considerably. According to the FAO, some 190 countries are currently involved in some kind of forest planning.

The nature of national planning processes in the developing countries has usually been based on the requirements of international support mechanisms and initiatives⁶. The most common initiative has been the *Tropical Forests Action Programme* (TFAP). In addition, other approaches have also been practised, usually as part of larger sectoral support programmes by international organisations such as the World Bank's *Forestry Sector Reviews* and the Asian Development Bank's *Forestry Master Plans*. Forest issues have also been tackled within the broader frameworks for environmental planning, for example *National Environmental Action Programmes* (NEAP, World Bank), *National Conservation Strategies* (by the World Conservation Organisation (IUCN) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)), *Biodiversity Action Plans*, *Biodiversity Strategies*, or as part of the even broader *National Sustainable Development Strategies*. In some cases these different processes have taken place alongside one another in the same country.

3.2 Tropical Forest Action Programme (TFAP) /National Forest Action Programme (NFAP)

In the early eighties, world-wide concern about the accelerating deforestation in the tropics led to increased calls for international action. Of particular concern were the potentially negative effects on standards of living (leading to poverty), the environment and opportunities for sustainable development. It was realised that forests and forestry played a very limited role in rural development, that their potential was under-utilised, and that they had only a minor role in national planning and international co-operation. Hence, in 1985, the Tropical Forestry Action Plan was launched on the initiative of (amongst others) the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Resource Institute (WRI), and the FAO, which adopted the task of co-ordinator and task manager.

The TFAP was meant to be a general conceptual, operational and co-ordinating framework for the intended increased efforts at international, national and local level.

As such, the TFAP had the following *functions*:

- to raise political and public awareness (national and international) of the situation of the tropical forests, with the aim of increasing the importance of forestry in national planning and international co-operation;
- to provide a framework for the evaluation of forest policy and for the identification of action strategies and investment priorities at national level;
- to increase funding for forestry activities;
- to strengthen and harmonise national efforts for sustainable forest management, and to provide a framework for co-ordination of international co-operation and investment.

Central to the implementation of the TFAP was the formulation of National Forestry Action Plans (NFAPs); it was a basic principle that countries themselves should take the lead and bear the main responsibility.

⁶ For the countries in the boreal and temperate zones this kind of overall forest planning frameworks were never developed.

Initially, the launching of TFAP created great momentum: never before had there been such broad, world-wide support for an initiative aimed at benefiting tropical forests. Practically all important donors supported the initiative (including several larger NGOs) and at one point more than 100 countries were implementing or developing forest plans within the framework of TFAP. In many countries valuable information about forests was collected.

From the outset there was a certain amount of criticism, which increased steadily in the early nineties, both from NGOs and also from some bilateral donors and organisations such as the World Bank. Deforestation was not decreasing and the expected policy reforms and additional financial aid were not being achieved. One major problem with the TFAP was that the policy process was often neglected, with too much emphasis being placed on planning and plans. Furthermore, there was also much criticism of the content and implementation of the plans. Various analyses at the time concluded that the TFAP focused too much on commercial forestry and that too little attention was being given to forest conservation and the interests of local people. The approach was considered too “top-down”; and it was emphasised that countries should themselves give more of a lead to the process. It was also observed that insufficient attention was given within national forest policy and planning processes to cross-sectoral links and that most plans did not tackle the need for reform of policy and institutions. In addition, most NFAPs were rather technocratic and too much directed at individual projects rather than at a longer-term policy, programme and process approach⁷. Ownership and commitment to TFAP was also insufficient, both on the part of the donors, several of which stuck to their own planning procedures and priorities, and of the recipient countries, many of which dropped out or made little progress. Several recipient countries took the TFAP as a mechanism primarily for project funding rather than as a framework for forest policy and programme development. The dilemma of national sovereignty versus donor requirements came overtly to the fore.

The TFAP was gradually adapted in response to the various criticisms and assessments and the experience gained. The FAO TFAP Co-ordination Unit (see 5.6), supported by the Forestry Advisers Group (FAG, see 5.7), rewrote the original guidelines several times, taking into account much of the experience and the lessons described above⁸.

Despite these adjustments, the TFAP as a world-wide mechanism ran out of steam, and around 1995 it became formally defunct. Nonetheless, activities under the umbrella of NFAPs are still being carried out in a large number of countries, particularly in Latin America. Current support is usually based on bilateral relationships, sometimes co-ordinated in co-operation with the FAO Regional Support Units. The Netherlands has always been very active in the TFAP/NFAP process, providing support both to the FAO Support Unit and (directly) to a number of countries.

Despite the limitations of the TFAP, and the extensive criticism which has been targeted at it, during the more than ten years of its existence it has considerably influenced global thinking and action with regard to the management of forests, particularly in the various countries in the tropics. More information about the experience gained in a number of countries can be found in Annex II.

3.3 Forestry (Sector) Master Plans/ Forestry Sector Reviews

Although a large number of developing countries have developed national forest plans within the framework of the TFAP/NFAP, a limited number of countries have followed other planning frameworks, such as Forestry (Sector) Master Plans (FMP or FMSP) or Forestry Sector Reviews (FSR) to get support from the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank respectively.

⁷ Based on these observations, around 1991, the name of the Tropical Forestry Action Plan was changed to the Tropical Forest Action Programme.

⁸ FAO (1992): *NFAP Operational Principles*; FAO (1996): *Basic Principles and Operational Guidelines: formulation, execution and revision of national forestry programmes*.

Forestry (Sector) Master Plans

The first FSMP was established for Finland, after the Second World War, to restore its devastated forestry and timber sector. The World Bank provided support.

The FSMP spans a planning horizon of 25 years and consists of extensive studies of all parts of the sector; these constitute the basis for a forest policy and investment plan. The concept was revived in the eighties when the Asian Development Bank decided to support Asian countries in their attempts to upgrade their forest sector. It soon became obvious that co-ordination with the TFAP process was necessary. Despite major similarities, both planning concepts also had a number of differences:

- The FSMP was mainly led by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) (with Finland as a frequent co-donor). The TFAP placed more emphasis on the multi-donor character of the process.
- One of the outcomes of the TFAP was a project portfolio to which –in principle– each donor could subscribe. The FSMP resulted in a much broader investment plan elaborated into so-called “sector projects”. These were basically financed by loans from the ADB; other donors, however, had difficulty in getting involved in a particular FSMP, or were unwilling to do so.
- Periodic national and international “Round Table” conferences were a central instrument in the TFAP process; in the FSMPs the process was usually completed with only a single national presentation.
- The planning horizon of TFAPs is 5 years and of FSMPs 25 years (which includes an initial phase).
- The preparatory studies under the FSMP were usually larger and more expensive (costing approx. US\$ 2 million) than the comparable “sector reviews” carried out under the TFAP.
- In its original form, the FSMP was rather traditional, not very participatory and principally directed towards commercial functions, whereas the TFAP –at least in theory– had included the concepts of “participation” and “multiple functions” of forests.

However, the differences have gradually diminished. The co-ordination of the two processes has in fact been quite good. There was agreement, for instance, that a country would be involved in either an TFAP or an FSMP process but never in both.

The first Asian FSMP was formulated in Sri Lanka, but this met with much criticism due to its technocratic character. After this, FSMPs were produced for Nepal, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan and Bhutan. The Netherlands co-financed part of a preparatory study in Pakistan, but the process received little support from the provinces and districts that were involved in implementation. The participatory character of the FSMPs gradually increased; in Thailand a process of extensive consultation took place and the wish expressed by NGOs for more participatory types of forestry eventually resulted in a draft “Community Forest Bill” (ca. 1992). However, approval of this bill became bogged down in the political decision-making process. In the early nineties a second FSMP was prepared in Sri Lanka; many parties took part in the process and participation was adopted as the main principle. However, this plan –already approved in 1995–, has not really been implemented either. Further information on Pakistan and Sri Lanka can be found in Annex II.

Forestry Sector Reviews

The World Bank’s Forestry Sector Reviews followed more or less the same format as that of the FSMPs. The FSR concept is also greatly influenced by the Bank and countries are required to follow strict rules, criteria and procedures in order to qualify for support. In the countries where the FSR concept has been used, such as Kenya, it has led to a great deal of criticism, similar to that of FSMPs, particularly that the approach was too much “from outside” and too much “bank-driven”, not participatory enough, and too much aimed at commercial functions. The World Bank was also the target of a lot of criticism from the other donors, who felt that they had too little influence and input with regard to the reviews and the follow-ups to them.

3.4 Other planning concepts

Against the background of the shortcomings and criticism of the planning approaches described above, a growing number of other planning initiatives were developed, including Environment Action Plans and Conservation Strategies. Particularly since the break-down of the TFAP –under the influence of international NGOs, development banks and donors–, parallel and occasionally competing initiatives have emerged in various countries. Each of these initiatives has its own set of objectives (often quite similar) but they are usually being implemented via different national institutions. On many occasions this has resulted in poor co-ordination, duplication of previous work, and a great degree of confusion and dissatisfaction (Liss, 1998). This point has been recognised in the IPF/IFF process and, for this reason, many of its recommendations include actions to link the different processes and initiatives, stimulating the use of the nfp concept (as set out in chapter 2) as a framework for forest matters.

4. WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM PREVIOUS AND PRESENT PLANNING PROCESSES?

This chapter will look into the most important factors behind the success or failure of national forest plan processes in various countries. Some important lessons for the further operationalisation of nfp's will be summarised. This chapter concentrates on planning processes in developing countries; it is partly based on the personal experience of members of the Support Group resulting from their involvement in a number of planning processes in various developing countries.

4.1 Introduction

The planning processes described in Chapter 3 and the experience gained constitute an important basis on which to draw lessons for the future. In addition, Annex II describes how a number of specific countries dealt with their national plan processes during the last 10 to 15 years. Although these should not be regarded as in-depth and systematic analyses, they do on the whole give quite a good impression and illustration of how the various processes have evolved and what the important issues and lessons⁹ have been. The experience of the countries described in Annex II to a large extent specifies and supports the criticism summarised in Chapter 3 with regard to conceptual and operational issues concerning the various planning processes.

However, what really becomes apparent from Chapter 3 and Annex II is that despite the sometimes major differences in the nature and scope of the various policy and planning processes, and despite the differences in their specific design and rate of success in the different countries, a number of indisputable *development trends* can be identified at the conceptual and policy level, albeit often still sparsely:

1. a greater focus on the policy and institutional dimensions of the process, rather than just on programmes and projects;
2. an ongoing socialisation and democratisation of the policy and planning process: participation;
3. a further integration of the policy and planning process, and an inter-sectoral approach to it;
4. a broadening focus towards multifunctional forest use;
5. more attention to the "ecologisation" of forest policy and management.

Up to the sixties and seventies the planning concept was primarily "top-down" and from a macro-economic perspective, basically directed towards the profitability of productive activities which were often conceived in large-scale projects. The importance of forests for the population and other not directly productive functions gradually received more attention, and concepts such as "sustainability", "bottom-up planning", "participation" and "multifunctional forest management" gradually emerged. Since the eighties, this has led to the introduction of several more highly integrated policy and planning frameworks and concepts to enhance forest management in developing countries (UNDP,1998)

These conceptual trends in the past, together with ongoing processes, have actually been consolidated in the formulation of the framework of the nfp principles (key elements) in the IPF (see 2.2.2). In this respect, the IPF's nfp principles are not only a confirmation of these *de facto* (positive) trends in thinking on national forest policy and planning, but they can also be seen as an internationally agreed list of points requiring attention, or consolidated lessons, which are the minimum which needs to be taken into account in the future design and implementation of nfp's.

As indicated in 2.3, IPF documents –for political reasons– do not clearly specify how these general principles or lessons can be converted into more practical action; this is primarily left to the countries themselves. Nevertheless, the experience gained from previous and current planning processes allows us to draw a number of additional lessons for more practical elaboration. Such lessons are very much needed, given that, despite positive developments at the conceptual level, there is still a major gap in

⁹ The experience and lessons gained from national forest planning have been well documented in various sources, see for example FAO NFAP Updates; FAO(1999); Glück et al. (1999); see also the bibliography.

most countries between the aims of different processes –at least as stated on paper– and their achievement in practice. In other words, “action” is still lagging far behind “thinking”.

A number of important results and lessons with regard to the implementation of previous nfp’s will be reviewed in chapters 4.2 and 4.3.

In doing this a distinction will be made between:

- *context factors*; these are factors related to the general situation of the countries concerned and the specific nature of the forest sector. These factors determine to a large extent the results and limitations of national forest processes in the short and medium term; they should be considered as preconditions for the general extent and design of policy, planning and implementation.
- *conceptual factors*; these are the conceptual, planning and operational aspects which should be taken into account in designing the actual nfp process, because it is they that ultimately determine the scope, effectiveness, quality, commitment and sustainability of the process and its results.

4.2 The context of national forest policy and planning

4.2.1 General

It is inherent to the situation of most developing countries that they are confronted by a vast series of problems and limitations such as poverty, unequal political and economic power relations; inadequate economic development and resources; corruption; weak and often top-down political and institutional structures; inadequate national capacity and organisational levels for policy development, planning, co-ordination and implementation; and great pressure on scarce natural resources. Many countries have no strong tradition of long-term policy and planning; planning is often mainly an “activity on paper”, which only is, or can be, implemented on an ad hoc basis. Here political instability is often a key factor; changes of government (sometimes frequent) always involve the danger that the nfp is regarded as something inherited from a previous government, resulting in a loss of political commitment.

4.2.2 Nature of the forest sector

The forest sector, too, finds itself confronted by a number of specific issues which must definitely be taken into account in order to allow forest sector policy development, planning and implementation to be realistic and successful.

Long-term forest management versus short-term society (“cortoplacismo”)

Forests and forest management have two inherent disadvantages that handicap their competitive power in relation to other sectors and activities:

- A forest or a tree can be felled in seconds, but it takes decades or even centuries before it is replaced by something comparable; investment in forests and forest management often does not lead to immediate results or profits; in other sectors the production cycle is usually much shorter;
- Most functions of forests (i.e. regulation, information, and nature) are difficult to quantify, not directly visible and not valued through market mechanisms (at least not yet). These functions mainly have a common and long-term interest; they are not directly exploitable and noticed/felt by individuals. This has resulted in a general under-valuation of the importance of forests and their functions.

The long-term nature of forest management is at odds with the tendency of decision-makers (politicians, managers, land-users) to allow short-term results to prevail over collective and long-term interests. There are many reasons for this, both political (political power) and socio-economic (poverty, economic power). When it really comes down to tangible choices, forests and forestry therefore often lose out. There are countless examples. This implicitly more limited competitiveness is perhaps one of the most fundamental disadvantages for the development of forest management and forest protection which –at least for the time being– can only be overcome by a kind of “*positive discrimination*”. Although this point may be obvious to forest experts, it is not brought to the attention of others

sufficiently; this is a point which should be more explicitly tackled in national forest policy processes. This could be achieved by having nfp's pay greater attention to the task of raising awareness and to extension activities directed at all decision-making levels, particularly at the highest political levels.

Conflicting forest uses

A forest is not just a place of peace and quiet; it is also an arena of conflicts. Forests are utilised by many groups (government bodies, local people, interest groups, industry) for vastly differing purposes. All these different groups, each from their own specific situation and background, have varying and usually not fully harmonising interests and priorities as regards the forest, or value the various forest functions in a different way. Hence, one cannot speak of a single uniform, like-minded sector. Unequal political and economic power balances and access to knowledge largely determine the actual use made of forests. Particularly in countries where the timber industry is a powerful stakeholder, for example Chile or Indonesia, this may be at the expense of other interests.

Hence, increasing pressure on forests not only gives rise to further forest degradation but also to the risk of an increased conflict of interests and actual conflicts between the various users. Conflicting interests, as well as common interests between groups, should be a more explicit factor in the process of national forest planning. Actor analysis and actor participation should be seen as one of the foundations for all levels of forest policy development and planning.

Weak and less influential forest institutions

Historically and in many cases still, the institutions concerned with forests have not been very effective and –particularly in countries where the timber industry is of restricted importance– they are also weak. This is demonstrated in limited planning and implementation capacity at all levels, insufficient manpower and knowledge, frequent changes of staff, bureaucracy and non-transparent, lengthy procedures, and poor co-ordination. The political influence of forest services is usually limited and their position in comparison with institutions in other sectors, for example agriculture, trade and industry, is usually weak. Particularly in countries with a dense forest cover, the private timber sector often holds almost all the cards.

Unfavourable image and profile of the forest sector

Historically, forest services in many countries have always been seen as traditional, closed and corrupt organisations. On top of this, employment in the forest sector often has little appeal; much of the work is usually situated in unattractive, remote areas and salaries are low.

Nor does the forest sector have a very strong tradition in positioning its working area in the context of society. For a long time, forest services claimed a monopoly of forest management, aiming to keep people out of the forest, under the motto “leave the management to us and everything will be all right”. This traditional approach is predominantly characterised by hierarchic, centralistic, self-centred (governmental) structures, mainly aimed at large-scale industrial timber production, conservation and watershed protection, and policing. Insufficient attention is still being given to the other functions and uses of forests, and to the claims coming from “advancing” society. In addition, insufficient attention is still paid to the needs and rights of the local population, who have often lived in and around the forest all their lives, using these forests and often claiming traditional rights of ownership. Although there have been recent changes for the better, this traditional and negative image often backfires on the sector itself: deforestation and non-sustainable forest management are too often regarded by society as a problem of the forest sector alone, and not as a societal problem.

This image is another reason why the forest sector still lacks political influence or (for example in countries where the timber sector is important) uses its influence only in a one-sided manner. Training and education, and the restructuring and reinforcement of forest institutions at all levels, must therefore receive a great deal of attention in an nfp.

4.2.3 Lessons

The above factors mean that policy development and planning of the forest sector, at least at the short term, is a problematical activity with many limitations, risks, uncertainties and conflicts. In many countries the tradition of national forest planning is (still) fairly weak and often has to be built up from scratch. Effective forest policy and planning requires a number of changes in the context which can only be achieved gradually and often only in the long term. In the past, efforts have been made to achieve too much too fast, while paying little attention to these everyday realities. In several countries this was the reason why elegant (and expensive) plans finally ended up unused because their feasibility and practicability were limited, and because these limitations were not adequately observed.

Three important lessons to be drawn from these facts are:

- ∅ *An nfp stands more chance of success if it is conceived and embedded as a broadly based, continuous, iterative and gradual, long-term process. This means that the formulation of a concrete plan or policy document must be seen as just an initial or an intermediate step in a (long-term) process and not as the end. This requires a flexible and dynamic approach, leaving sufficient room for ongoing co-ordination, negotiation and adjustment.*
- ∅ *A successful nfp focuses principally on strengthening the processes of awareness-raising, increasing political commitment and economic support, enhancing the policy, planning and implementation capacities of the parties involved, and strengthening their ability for effective participation, dialogue, negotiation, co-ordination and co-operation. The core processes are “learning by doing” and “building of dialogue, capacity and institutional memory”.*
- ∅ *A good nfp should be ambitious in its (mid-term and long-term) objectives, but it must be realistic in its short-term implementation targets. Over-dimensioning of the implementation of an nfp should be avoided. The rate of implementation of an nfp should comply with the development of capacities and with the resources available in the course of time.*

4.3 Design of the process

The ultimate success of an nfp in terms of scope, effectiveness, quality, support and sustainability (both of the process and the results) depends largely on how the process takes shape. The following factors are of the utmost importance.

a. National sovereignty and “country leadership”

Many of the earlier internationally initiated processes were rather cumbersome, or failed to get off the ground at all because many developing countries experienced them as direct attempts by donors or potential donors to influence their national policies and to force priorities upon them which did not match their own felt needs. Donors have regularly overestimated the possibility of using their influence and resources to bring about policy changes in a country. Another problem has been that plans were often formulated by teams dominated by foreign consultants who generally gave more weight to the criteria and procedures of the donor than to the situations and needs of the recipient country. Hence, plans in various countries were rather “donor-driven” and the recipient countries primarily considered them as a “necessary evil” to ensure donor funds parallel to their own forest planning. Eventually, hardly any “ownership” of the plan was generated.

It is also being increasingly realised that nfp’s can only be successful in the long term if the countries themselves actually want an nfp and explicitly take on the leadership and initiative for this. Experience shows that it makes little sense to support an nfp process externally if there is no internal motivation. That this point was not much different in the distant past is clearly illustrated by the example given by Persson (1998) of the situation in Sweden at the end of the nineteenth century (see Annex 3). Persson states that in those days effective forest planning only came about after the most important parties involved had decided to pool their efforts. According to Persson, foreign support would have had only a limited effect in accelerating this process.

Lessons:

- ∅ *Nfp's should primarily be **nationally led initiatives** in which the country concerned must shoulder the full responsibility and leadership.*
- ∅ *Donors should have a **supplementary and facilitatory role** (and only when requested by a recipient country).*

b. Political commitment and positioning of the process

Although many countries have formally committed themselves to instituting a national forest policy and planning process, in reality this often only takes place to a limited extent. If an nfp is to stand a chance of success, long-term, broad commitment from all those involved is essential: government, politicians and other groups in society. Commitment is particularly important at the highest levels of political decision-making within the government, because it is these who actually have to take the lead and full responsibility for the process.

The experience gained by various countries has shown that nfp processes have been most successful in those countries where commitment and political will have been embedded within the government in the following ways:

- *a high level of political commitment* to the process stated in a "National Forest Statement", in which the national importance of forests and the nfp principles are endorsed, and expressed in the decisiveness needed to actually bring about the necessary political and institutional reforms.
- The *institutional positioning* of the process. If an nfp is to stand any chance of success, it must be embedded at a sufficiently high level within the national institutional structure, preferably in the form of a national co-ordination unit. In Colombia, for instance, the process was positioned from the outset at a very high level within the national planning department, where a special co-ordination unit was established. This proved to be very advantageous when it came to policy-making and defining budget priorities (see annex II). In many countries where the process has been given too low a status, for example within a forestry service, the impact of the process and support for it has often proved inadequate.
- Explicit allocation of *sufficient resources and manpower* in the national budget over a long period of time.
- A genuine intention to make an nfp a *nationally supported, participative, and co-ordinated process*, in which the major stakeholders are involved.

Lessons:

Nfp processes are particularly successful:

- ∅ *in cases where there is political commitment at high level;*
- ∅ *when they are embedded at a high level within the government structure;*
- ∅ *when a special structure is established (nfp co-ordination unit) with sufficient resources and decision making powers.*

c. Integration into the political-strategic and policy context

Many countries still formulate their nfp without sufficient regard for other national policies and implementation programmes, the regional and global environmental situation, and international conventions and agreements. This has more than once led to inconsistencies in policy, contradictory measures and ineffective implementation. If an nfp is to be successful, it should be well integrated into national sustainable development policies, plans and regional and local strategies. Nfp's should form part of land use plans (national and local) and other programmes with a broader scope, such as Environmental Action Plans, plans for the implementation of Agenda 21, or any other international conventions and related initiatives.

Lesson:

- ∅ *Nfp's are more effective when they are consistent with national policy and international agreements.*

d. Intersectoral approach

Forest management, including the management of trees in rural areas, should always be seen in the broader context of sustainable land management, conservation and strengthening of ecological stability, diversity and resilience and social and economic development. Although –in theory at least– many nfp’s aim at this kind of integrated, cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary and national strategy and action planning for sustainable management and conservation of forests, in practice it turns out that nfp’s are still largely orchestrated only by the forest sector itself, often with a narrow-sectoral focus and traditional forestry approach in which other sectors, NGOs and the private sector participate inadequately. Moreover, many governments still see nfp’s primarily as ad hoc instruments for the forest sector with which to attract external funding for projects.

A thorough analysis of cross-sectoral linkages and a resulting integrated strategy that indicates what must be done –both in the forest sector but also in the other sectors and in national policy– to make forest policy effective is often still lacking. This is remarkable since it is now widely recognised that the biggest obstacles to combating indiscriminate deforestation and land degradation and achieving sustainable forest management stem from non-forest sectors and over-all government policy.

A national forest programme should therefore not only indicate sector-specific measures, but also what kind of measures must be taken in other sectors and at a macro level in order to create conditions conducive to the conservation and sustainable management of forests. To ensure adequate commitment to such an intersectoral approach, the above-mentioned positioning and support for the nfp process is therefore essential.

Lesson:

- ∅ *An nfp is most effective when it is not merely a plan **of** or **by** the forest sector, but a broadly supported, coherent policy process and action programme **for** the sector.*

e. Participation, partnership and co-ordination

One major aim of participation is to get across an accepted and realistic policy and planning process in which all stakeholders feel represented. In addition, participation must contribute to an equitable distribution of costs, benefits, responsibilities and liabilities and optimum utilisation of the knowledge and experience of the parties concerned.

Although the benefits and necessity of participation and transparent decision-making are usually widely supported, they appear to be difficult to implement in almost all countries. This is partly due to the above-mentioned conflicts of interests and imbalances of power. However, the lack of a participatory tradition, together with the lack of knowledge and experience of methodologies for putting participation into practice, also present serious obstacles. Guatemala is one of the countries where a lot of effort has been put into the development of participatory instruments, with some success in involving the various layers of the population in the process. The lesson to be learned from Guatemala is that the organisation and institutionalisation of participation should be an ongoing process, for which sufficient time must be set aside and which requires regular follow-up and monitoring.

The same applies, more or less, to partnerships. The added value of partnerships is generally recognised, but in practice it has proved difficult to actually set up such partnerships, hence existing planning and implementation capacity remains under-utilised. Here too there is a need for methodology development (for example “public-private partnerships”, mechanisms for co-ordination), support and examples of where and under what conditions partnerships were successful.

Lessons:

- ∅ *Nfp processes should primarily be aimed at bringing together all interested parties who feel some kind of commitment to the process.*
- ∅ *Agreement on nfp’s should be on the basis of participatory decision-making and the achievement of consensus by the parties involved. This should be an ongoing process for which sufficient time should be taken.*

- ∅ *Partnership should be encouraged, making optimum use of the specific expertise and capacities of all parties involved.*
- ∅ *Transparent exchange of information is very important to the process.*

f. Decentralisation and regionalisation

In many countries, the nfp process still appears to be a capital-based and centrally-directed activity, often limited to few field projects. Effectiveness and progress are therefore limited. In a number of countries such as Zambia, Cameroon, Senegal and particularly Bolivia, serious attempts have been made to decentralise the process to departmental/provincial level. The results of such decentralisation were predominantly positive. In Bolivia, decentralisation of the nfp process took place concurrently with the administrative decentralisation of government policy that started in 1993. A great deal of attention was paid to setting up decentralised network structures, improving communication within the forest sector and integrating training into planning. This resulted not only in a greater degree of commitment to the policy and planning process by the regional players, but the participatory approach to planning also meant that input was possible in policy formulation and the implementation capacity was increased.

Lesson:

- ∅ *A strategy for decentralisation and regionalisation, including the required mechanisms, should be an intrinsic part of the nfp process from the outset.*

g. Multi-stakeholder approach and conflict management

As stated earlier, the use, conservation and management of forests involves many different parties, each with their own differing views, aims, powers and interests. It is therefore important that an nfp process should include mechanisms for managing conflicts. Here it is important that an nfp makes explicit a shared vision of the role and interest of the most important parties concerned (government, NGOs, private sector, local communities). Many of the present policies and plans have been formulated too much from a (directive) government perspective and with commercial interests at heart, meaning in particular that the interests of disadvantaged groups, for example indigenous populations, are insufficiently represented.

Lesson:

- ∅ *From the outset, an nfp should take account of the existing conflicts of interests and the varying aims of the parties involved; transparent mechanisms for conflict management should be incorporated.*

h. Information and communication

One of the strengths of many national forest programme processes has been that a large amount of very useful information has been collated within a relatively short time. Nevertheless, it has also become clear that the decisions taken in many countries are still based too often on narrow, unreliable and outdated information. Moreover, existing information is often dispersed over many sources, and users are often unaware of the extent and location of the information available. For financial, institutional and political reasons, much of this information is often not easily accessible.

In addition, the provision of information and communication with respect to the forest planning process are often deficient. The way priorities are defined, the impact and the commitment to the plans by the general public, at policy level and at the level of regional implementation has therefore remained inadequate in many countries. In Bolivia, attempts are being made to tackle these problems to some extent by deliberately establishing network structures, together with decentralising planning and policy-making and integrating training into planning, all of which help improve communication in the forest and nature sector.

Lesson:

- ∅ *An information and communication strategy should be an integral part of an nfp process.*

i. Ecosystem approach and multi-functionality

In many national forest plans, forests are still to some extent seen as a “resource” for wood and other timber products; nfp’s often do not pay due attention to the great importance of the regulation functions (and hence their importance for agriculture, water and energy supply, and environmental stability), the nature functions (biodiversity), and the integral role of forest dwellers in the ecosystem. There is also insufficient emphasis on the fact that forests themselves are diverse and complex ecosystems, each with its own carrying capacity and potential, and that their functions and carrying capacity can only be sustainably maintained if forests are treated as an “ecosystem” and not just as a “resource”. Here reference must be made to the efforts to further define and operationalise the concept of “ecosystem approach”, especially under the Convention on Biological Diversity ; the principles developed for the concept will be a topic for discussion and endorsement at CBD COP5 in May 2000; a link to the IFF process will probably be made.

Lesson:

- ∅ *The concept of forest ecosystem management for the sustainable fulfilment of forest functions and balanced consideration and valuation of functions should be a more explicit principle in many nfp’s.*

j. Institutional capacity

One of the most important reasons for the lack of headway and implementation of nfp processes is perhaps the limited institutional capacity for policy development, planning, formulation, implementation and monitoring in the forest sector. Organisations are usually undermanned and staff are often poorly educated and frequently transferred. Nearly all organisations in the forest sector suffer from limited funding, inefficient structures and unclear mandates; they often have limited responsibility and decision-making powers. These constraints cannot be relieved in the short term, however, and certainly not solely by means of training or education, but require a gradual process in which *capacity building* and *human resource development* must go hand in hand with institutional development of all the organisations that deal with forests.

Lessons:

- ∅ *Institutional capacity building should be one of the mainstays of an nfp process, given that it determines to a great extent the nature, extent and rhythm of the whole planning process.*
- ∅ *Institutional capacity building is an ongoing, gradual process which should be focused both at the human resource level and the organisation level.*

k. Role of the donors

It should be noted that in many developing countries, external support is indispensable both for the development and implementation of forest policies and for programmes. Although donor contributions should basically be aimed at supporting and reinforcing national processes, in practice this has regularly turned out otherwise. Many national programmes have been formulated with heavy input and pressure from outside, sometimes exclusively so. Heavy donor pressure has often not only affected national priorities, but also hampered national commitment to the process and ownership of it. On more than one occasion, donor domination has led to conflicts between the recipient country and the donors.

When it comes to implementation, donors have come up with often far less funding than was anticipated in the programmes; some donors are apparently willing to fund only the “best bits”, namely those elements of the programme that best match their own policy, or those which are most attractive on the home front; a long-term commitment to the entire process is usually lacking. Besides, a considerable number of donors have not taken an existing nfp as the framework for their support, financing activities that were not included in the nfp. Furthermore, donor co-ordination in many countries has proved to be insufficient and incoherent.

Another problem for the recipient countries is that almost every donor must comply with its own specific requirements for project proposals and that the procedures for approval and settlement are lengthy; the latter is partly caused by insufficient capacity for identification, appraisal and approval. Hence, it sometimes takes years before a project is ready for implementation.

Lessons:

- ∅ *Donor support in many cases appears to be indispensable, but it can only be effective when it is based on partnership, equality, continuity and long-term commitment to the entire plan or planning process.*
- ∅ *An nfp should be accepted and used as the basis for external financing and donor co-ordination.*
- ∅ *Donors should harmonise and co-ordinate their support activities and administrative procedures more effectively; in addition, they should also be prepared to agree –among themselves and with the recipient countries– on “best practice” or a “code of conduct” for support to the forest sector.*

I. Funding of nfp's

In nearly all countries, nfp's suffer from a chronic lack of financing. In the first place, this is because inadequate amounts of funds (both public and private) are generated within the country itself. In many countries this situation can partly be explained by the low status and limited importance of the forest sector, the under-valuing of its significance to the national economy and welfare, and the general perception that sound forest management is hardly ever profitable. On the other hand, in many countries which do have a high forest cover, the revenues generated from forests are often not re-invested in the sector itself. Many countries have not yet developed specific mechanisms to stimulate public and private investment in the forest sector; in many cases current macro-economic and sectoral policies and legislation in fact even discourage investment in sustainable forest management. Furthermore, many plans lean too heavily on external financing, which often fails to materialise adequately. Many plans are too ambitious in terms of implementation, meaning that the process in many countries has lost its momentum and credibility.

Lessons:

- ∅ *the planning and implementation of nfp's should be based on realistic financial planning;*
- ∅ *an nfp must include a funding strategy, which should aim in the first place at increasing the level of financing from national sources;*
- ∅ *the latter also requires work on such things as adequate valuation of forest goods and services, revenue collection, incentive/disincentive structures, analysis of beneficiaries structures.*

4.4 Conclusion

The findings discussed emphasise the relevance of the framework of principles for nfp's, as formulated in the IPF. This is a crucial list of points which should be given due consideration in order to make national forest policy and planning a success. Many lessons from the past are still relevant and are a useful complement to nfp principles. The extent to which these lessons are taken seriously will largely determine the likelihood of present and future nfp processes being successful. It is therefore of the utmost importance that mechanisms are developed and reinforced –at both national and international levels– which ensure feedback of the experience and lessons gained into the current nfp processes. This should not only comprise “South-South” mechanisms, but equally “South-North” exchange: various lessons learned in planning processes in developing countries are equally useful in planning processes in the temperate and boreal zones.

5. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND INITIATIVES

This chapter provides a short survey of international and national developments and initiatives regarding the operationalisation of the nfp concept as defined in the IPF which have recently been started up as a result of the IPF/IFF process.

5.1 Introduction

In order not to lose the momentum of the IPF process, the CSD established the *Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Forum on Forests* (IFF) in 1997. The IFF's mandate is to tackle a number of "unresolved questions" of the IPF and to promote and monitor the implementation of the IPF Proposals for Action, including those for nfp's. During its second session, the IFF listed the following priority actions for the implementation of the IPF Proposals (UN-CSD, 1998):

- support developing countries in their nfp process (§ 9a) and also use nfp's as a framework for channelling development assistance, especially for capacity building, and for the creation of participatory mechanisms and innovative financing arrangements (§ 9f);
- promote an integrated approach by countries through their nfp's (§ 9b);
- create and strengthen partnerships, which might include partnership agreements, in order to encourage participation and commitment on the part of all relevant parties (§ 9c);
- take in hand the systematic evaluation, planning and implementation of the IPF Proposals by all countries in the context of their own national plans and processes (§9d), in a continuous, participatory and iterative process (§ 9e);
- ensure the establishment by each country of a *focal point* to guide and co-ordinate the assessment and implementation of the IPF Proposals and nfp process (§ 9f).

As a result of the IPF/IFF process, a number of supporting initiatives on nfp's –as yet primarily international– have been set up in developing countries¹⁰. The most important initiatives appear to be the *Six-Country Initiative* (5.2), the *Forest Partnership Agreements* (5.3), the *Interagency Task Force for Forests* (ITFF, 5.4) and the *UNDP Global Programme on Forests* (5.5). The work carried out by the *FAO Nfp Support Programme* and the *Forestry Advisers Group* (FAG) is the driving force behind these initiatives (5.6 and 5.7).

5.2 Six-Country Initiative

As a result of the recognition that countries have actually taken on the political obligation to work out the IPF Proposals at national level, together with the fact that no actual ways and means have been indicated for doing so, six countries (Germany, Finland, Honduras, Indonesia, the UK and Uganda) established the so-called "*Government-led Six-Country Initiative 'Putting the IPF Proposals for Action into Practice'*" in 1998. The initiative stated that its objective was to enhance the implementation of the Proposals at national level and to develop guidance for consideration by the IFF (and the countries involved) based on the experience gained in their respective "translation" processes. The six countries established that the formulations in the IPF Proposals for Action Document are not always entirely clear and that a significant number of proposals are either fragmented or overlap with others. It is therefore not always possible to implement them directly at national level.

The implementation of the Proposals should be considered as a conversion process made up of the following three steps:

- Assessment of the relevance and value of the Proposals against the background of the existing national forest-related policy frameworks, international obligations and the situation and priorities

¹⁰ Except for the Six-Country Initiative, the various initiatives are focused primarily on promoting the nfp processes in tropical developing countries; however, one encouraging development is that an increasing number of initiatives are being taken in other regions as well to further elaborate the role of nfp's; this is especially the case at the Pan-European level (for example the nfp workshop Freiburg, Germany, 1998; Tulln, Austria, 1999). A description of these initiatives is beyond the scope of this document.

- in each country (and vice versa);
- Integration and internalisation of the Proposals within existing national processes (national forest plans and related instruments in other sectors);
- Identification of country-specific action to be taken.

On the basis of country case studies, each of the six countries has studied how the IPF Proposals relate to its specific national context and planning process (and vice versa). This took place between February and May 1998. To facilitate the screening process and to make it possible to compare the results, a user-friendly "*Practitioner's Guide*" was produced on the basis of the IPF Proposals. An international meeting was held in July 1998 to discuss the results of the country case studies.

The most important results with respect to nfp's were:

- The screening methodology developed by the Initiative proved to be very useful. The Practitioner's Guide was particularly helpful, although further elaboration and refinement was considered necessary to facilitate its use at national level. The importance of the establishment of a national *focal point* was stressed, as well as the importance of allocating enough time and means. It was also stressed that the results of international processes, such as IPF/IFF, should be drawn up in a clear and practical format in order to simplify the transition to the national level.
- Participation and awareness-raising on the part of all relevant national stakeholders in the nfp process are considered to be key processes for the assessment, integration and internalisation of the IPF Proposals in each country. The importance of a systematic exchange of information and open communication between parties was stressed.
- Up to now, the participation of developing countries in the IPF/IFF process had been limited; this needs to be increased. Moreover, it emerged that in many countries the IPF/IFF process is to a large extent only familiar to those who are most directly involved; broad-based participation and involvement in the process is therefore still out of question.
- In order to implement the IPF/IFF Proposals, a transparent monitoring and reporting system is required at national level, one that focuses on both the process and the results. As far as possible, the system will have to be integrated into existing mechanisms and procedures (such as an nfp) and focus on nationally defined priorities and actions.
- It was concluded that an nfp is a valuable instrument for the implementation of the IPF Proposals and that it has great potential for implementation, co-ordination, monitoring, participation and communication at national level and for co-ordination with international instruments.

The approach and the results of the Initiative were positively received at IFF-II. The interesting part of the Initiative is the implicit equity and reciprocity between the countries involved: the three rich nations and the three developing nations have decided to study their individual forest policies in a similar and mutually agreed manner.

The countries involved in the Six-Country Initiative decided to continue the process, albeit largely on an individual basis. In Indonesia, Uganda, Germany and also Australia, processes are underway for assessment of the IPF proposals and their integration into national policies by developing nfp's. Some countries are embarking on similar processes using the revised *Practitioner's Guide* presented to the IFF-III in May 1999. Other countries have been invited to do the same. The Netherlands is considering joining the ongoing initiative.

5.3 Forest Partnership Agreements (FPAs)

The Forest Partnership Agreement (FPA) concept was launched by the UNDP in 1995; the idea was later picked up and worked out by the Forestry Advisers Group (see 5.7) and the IUCN. FPAs are regularly mentioned in the IPF/IFF process as a potential approach for improved co-ordination and co-operation between national and international partners. FPAs are primarily meant to be as complementary instruments to ensure the implementation of nfp's; their form and content may vary from country to country.

An FPA should be understood as an instrument to be used to co-ordinate and formalise the activities of

international and national bodies in the area of forests. The idea of FPAs arose from the conclusion that insufficient co-operation and co-ordination, at both national and international levels, is a major constraint on the actual implementation of nfp's. At national level, there is often a lack of participatory mechanisms for effectively integrating the various parties concerned in conformity with their mandates, interests, legal status and capacities. At international level, the lack of co-ordination has led to a proliferation of initiatives and instruments. This has, more than once, led to parallel –often heavily donor driven– activities within the same country, thus severely hampering national planning processes.

At national level, FPAs should primarily serve as a mechanism for co-ordination between governmental institutions, for dialogue between stakeholders at the various different levels, for monitoring results and for channelling funds. The main function of international FPAs should be to co-ordinate international involvement to ensure and provide support for nationally-led nfp processes. Elements to be included in an international FPA might be: commitment of national governments and external donors to international standards for sustainable forest management; commitment of external institutions to respecting a country's national planning processes and instruments; improved harmonisation of the rules and procedures required by donors and financial institutions; and the creation of mechanisms for uniting or combining financial resources in support of "country-driven" programmes.

As yet, the FPA is still mainly a draft that has to be worked out in greater detail and tested for practicality. In Ecuador, the FPA was tried out with support from the GTZ, Finnida and the UNDP, but was in fact relatively unsuccessful. This was partly due to the unstable political and institutional situation in Ecuador, but also ambitions which were too high ("too much, too fast"); the process was also perhaps still too donor-driven. In Vietnam, the Netherlands Embassy, Germany, UNDP and other parties are taking a lead role in structuring a partnership process in collaboration with the government for the national 5 Million Hectare Reforestation Programme. The aim is to create a sector support programme according to agreed principles and policy guidelines which is compatible with the IPF Proposals. Another example is Uganda, where agreement has been reached between donors and the government on a Forest Sector Umbrella Programme (Liss, 2000 pers. comm.).

The direction in which the FPA concept will develop is still unclear. The experience gained in the ongoing pilot projects will provide important clues for the future. Some are rather positive and advocate an international Forest Partnership Facility (Aho, 1999) as well as a legal and institutional basis for FPAs, both nationally and internationally (Skala-Kuhmann, 1997). The need for such a facility, and its feasibility, will need to be looked into in the coming years. The Netherlands believes that longer-term, international partnerships between nations in order to support nfp processes are important, but it does not think that a completely formalised FPA is an absolute prerequisite.

5.4 Interagency Task Force on Forests (ITFF)

During the second session of the IFF it was noted that a number of what were once the main channels for international forest support for the poorest nations no longer exist. Furthermore, it became apparent that because of this Official Development Aid (ODA) funds for forests and nfp's had considerably decreased since 1993. An important item requiring action in the IFF was that the donor community was called upon to develop new mainstream, decentralised financial and technical support mechanisms for nfp's. The most important initiatives in this area have been undertaken under the direction of the (High-level, Informal) Interagency Task Force for Forests (ITFF), which is co-ordinated by the FAO.

The ITFF was established in 1995 in order to streamline co-operation between the various inter-governmental organisations and initiatives involved in the IPF/IFF process. It includes (amongst other bodies) FAO, the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO), the UN Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), UNEP, UNDP, the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the World Bank, and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity, DPCSD).

The ITFF has three major tasks: to provide support for the IPF/IFF secretariat; to prepare documents for

IPF/IFF dialogue; and to ensure co-ordinated follow-up of the IPF Proposals for Action by inter-governmental organisations. A Plan has been drawn up for the latter task that identifies the following elements for country support for nfp's: capacity building, improved co-ordination for implementation, integration of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management in nfp processes, improvement of the quality of nfp processes, and improvement of the monitoring, evaluation and information supply for nfp processes. For the implementation of the various programme elements, the organisations concerned have agreed on who will take the lead on what element. The FAO is the general task manager for the ITFF; it also takes the lead in the IPF programme element "Implementation of IPF Proposals". Funding is partly from regular budgets and trust funds. In addition, extra-budgetary funds are required from other donors; so far, the response has been limited, so that the ITFF plan has hardly been implemented as yet.

5.5 UNDP Programme on Forests (PROFOR)

The UNDP *Programme on Forests –Forest Management to support Sustainable Livelihoods (PROFOR)*– is a support initiative which emanated from the IPF/IFF process to support the implementation of the IPF Proposals for Action and the ongoing forest-related discussion at the international level. The goal of PROFOR is to enhance the contribution of forests to sustainable livelihoods and sustainable development through the adoption of effective strategies for sustainable forest management. At national level, the programme is being implemented in five partner countries (Cameroon, Costa Rica, Guyana, Malawi and Vietnam). At international level, PROFOR is working on thematic issues such as finance and sustainable livelihood approaches, incorporating aspects of governance in relation to sustainable management of forests.

The conceptual approach of the programme is underpinned by three interconnecting and mutually supportive programme elements:

1. improving understanding of the constraints and opportunities for sustainable forest management (SFM);
2. strengthening national and international forest policy and planning processes; and
3. developing financing strategies, mechanisms and instruments for SFM.

PROFOR supports the development and testing of ideas and processes, synthesises the experience and lessons learned, and disseminates information on good practice, particularly in the areas of national forest programmes (nfp's) and forest sector financing, with a particular emphasis on the question of how to stimulate private investment through targeted government funding.

PROFOR is envisaged to run initially for four years (1997-2001). Operation in the pilot countries started in 1998. The first phase of 18 months served to develop a conceptual and operational basis for a more comprehensive second phase which will focus primarily on processes of policy development and the expansion of institutional capacity. The output of the initial phase will also be used to refine UNDP's strategy on forest issues, which will be disseminated to the Country Offices. The basic outline for future operation was elaborated during a Review Meeting in September 1999, with participation by pilot countries, donors and key international agencies (FAO, World Bank, IIED). The final formulation will take place after internal evaluation of the programme in early 2000, taking into account the outcome of IFF 4. Beside UNDP, PROFOR is co-funded by Denmark, the European Commission, Finland and the UK (Liss, 2000, pers. comm.).

5.6 FAO nfp Support Programme

Among inter-governmental organisations, FAO has always been the focal point for forests. In this capacity, FAO was both co-ordinator and facilitator of the TFAP/NFAP process (see chapter 3). For this purpose, the TFAP/NFAP Support Unit was established within the Forestry Department in Rome. After the TFAP was formally abolished in 1995, the Support Unit was gradually transformed into a unit that supports countries in their nfp processes and helps implement the IPF Proposals. Regional Support Units were set up –simultaneously with the over-all decentralisation of the FAO– in Bangkok, Accra and Santiago. The Netherlands supports the NFP Regional Support Unit in Latin America via the

“Support to National Forest Programmes” project. This project supports national planning processes as regards such aspects as: awareness-raising and promotional activities, institutional support, training and workshops, monitoring and the exchange of information, and the production of guidelines and thematic papers.

In 1998-1999, the FAO conducted a world-wide survey on the status and progress of nfp's. This was carried out with a forward outlook; besides mapping out the current state of affairs, attention was also paid to deciding which lessons from the past can be useful in the future development and promotion of nfp's. The survey was conducted in approximately 190 countries in which some form of national strategic forestry planning has been implemented. Basically, the period from 1984 on has been studied, with particular attention to developments over the past 5 years, during which no systematic stocktaking has been carried out. The results of the survey were presented during the IFF III in May 1999.

The results of the survey largely corroborate the findings described in chapter 4: nfp processes are being carried out in most countries, but their quality and the level of commitment to the process are rather variable and actual implementation is usually quite limited. The survey report states that what needs to be done world-wide to strengthen and support nfp's is already clear enough: current limitations are well known, as are the steps needed to improve the situation. The lack of capacity-building at all levels is the biggest constraint on the progress of the nfp process; in particular, more attention needs to be given to improving institutional structures, developing human resources and mobilising funds. It is concluded that –internationally– the nfp process needs to be revitalised and that forest issues must be more explicitly communicated to the policy and decision-making levels, especially given that a diminishing interest in forest issues has been noticed world-wide. Based on the outcomes of the surveys, follow-up actions will be defined at the next FAO Regional Forestry Committee Meetings (scheduled for 2000).

Unfortunately, FAO's work in supporting nfp processes is at present greatly restricted by lack of funding and to a certain extent also lack of understanding of the nfp concept. Many approaches in various countries still suffer from the old TFAP/NFAP thinking and are still rather technically oriented. FAO will need to adjust its support in the direction of a coherent approach in the sense of the IPF Proposals and their implementation. UNDP PROFOR is taking concrete steps to link up with FAO in this regard.

5.7 Forestry Advisers Group (FAG)

The Forestry Advisers Group is an informal forum of advisers from the major international organisations and donor countries¹¹. The group has identified its most important task as advising on how donors can support sustainable forest management in developing countries. In the past, the FAG (formerly the Tropical Forestry Advisers Group) was very much involved in the TFAP/NFAP process¹². The FAG has always had an important function in this process as a think-tank, in monitoring, and as an important institutional memory.

During the first phase of its existence (up to the early nineties), the FAG was largely concerned with the practical co-ordination and monitoring of the implementation of the TFAP process, which included mobilising and co-ordinating donor support. Besides this, the FAG also put a great deal of energy into promoting the exchange of experience and advancing the conceptual development of TFAP. Later, especially after the UNCED, attention became increasingly focused on international policy development. The implementation (and close monitoring) of the IPF Proposals for Action and IFF recommendations currently make up the framework of FAG activities; the most important guiding principle in getting this across is how to enhance and support *nationally driven* nfp processes.

¹¹ At European level, the European Tropical Forestry Advisers Group (ETFAG) should be mentioned. This is an informal expert group formed to support forest development co-operation within the European Union and the Member States.

¹² In fact, the TFAP was the actual reason for the establishment of the advisers group.

The FAG now sees its most important function as actively thinking along with the process of implementing the IPF Proposals; it therefore has close contacts with the IFF and the ITFF. In this role, the FAG has been able to make a positive contribution; one restriction, however, is that the FAG is still largely made up of donor advisers, whereas its mandate is global. Additionally, there is an increasing need for regionally organised advisory groups made up of forest advisers from the developing countries themselves. This could guarantee a process of information exchange between countries about their individual processes that better matches their own needs and possibilities. The importance of this has now been more or less recognised and is being actively propagated by the FAG.

5.8 Conclusion

In the wake of the IPF Proposals for Action, a number of initiatives have been started on nfp's. Part of the work is focused on developing them further and making them more precise –both conceptually and operationally–, within the context of the implementation of the IPF Proposals. Furthermore, attention has been given to how countries –at their own requested– can be actively supported in designing and strengthening their own processes. The basic thinking behind all the initiatives is to initiate processes, share experience and exchange ideas, with co-operation on the basis of equality and respect for the individuality and autonomy of each nation. The new paradigm appears to be “learning-by-doing instead of imposing”.

The initiatives are just beginning to take off. The Six-Country Initiative appears to have made most progress. This initiative is of special interest because it has been carried out in an open, mutual process involving a number of countries –both developing and developed– on a basis of equality and reciprocity, focusing primarily on learning from one other. This set-up is unique and the approach adopted would seem to be a valuable one for other countries as well.

The FAO nfp Support Unit, and especially the regional units, can and must take on a major role in facilitating the exchange of experience and promoting co-operation between countries aimed at advancing their respective nfp processes. The recently conducted FAO nfp survey could serve as a good starting point for this. Within the overall process, the FAG has always had an important function as a think-tank and co-ordinator; regional FAGs could be a valuable addition. The UNDP PROFOR Programme may provide useful input to help support nfp's. The other initiatives described are experiencing some difficulties in advancing because of lack of funds and/or a lack of broad-based support. Although the focus of the above-mentioned initiatives is primarily on developing countries, it is interesting to note that in other regions too, for example at the Pan-European level, increasing efforts are being made to work out the nfp concept.

6. HOW CAN THE NETHERLANDS PROVIDE EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FOR NFP PROCESSES?

6.1 Introduction

Importance of support and prerequisites for it

The importance of international support for the implementation of the IPF Proposals for Action, and especially the nfp processes, has already been endorsed by various bodies. The developing countries themselves have also explicitly requested such support. The most important conclusion of this report, however, is that support is only worthwhile and effective if the recipient countries themselves are putting serious efforts into leading their own national forest policy and planning processes. External support should primarily serve to facilitate and strengthen country driven and nationally led processes.

The true commitment of a country to actually putting the nfp principles as established by the IPF (see 2.2.2) into operation in their forest planning should become the main criterion with which to assess whether a country is eligible for nfp support.

Policy of the Netherlands

The Netherlands has endorsed the *IPF Proposals for Action* and wishes to encourage their implementation. One of the priorities in Dutch development co-operation policy on forests is to support developing nations in reinforcing their individual nfp processes. In the past, the Netherlands has provided much support in this field, especially within the scope of TFAP/NFAP, both internationally and regionally, and at country level.

The main priority of Dutch development co-operation policy on nfp's is to provide support in the countries themselves. As far as possible, nfp's will be an important framework for embedding and prioritising the forest programmes of the various embassies. In addition, support can be provided at global and regional level in order to reinforce national processes and enhance the exchange of experience and co-ordination between countries.

6.2 Support at national level

At national level, the main target of international support should be to reinforce national capacity to realise effective, high-quality planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of nfp processes. Activities might primarily be supported that contribute to operationalising the lessons described in chapter 4 and the priority actions as formulated at IFF-2 (see chapter 5.1). Support could be given to the actual implementation of plans, programmes and projects resulting from the nfp process.

In particular, the following activities might be considered:

- Direct support for the nfp process, including the provision of seed money to put into practice specific elements evolving from the process;
- Support (temporary) and reinforcement for the units (focal points) that are formally responsible for nfp co-ordination;
- Support for co-ordination mechanisms,
- Boost participation, partnership and awareness of all relevant stakeholders as a key process;
- Boost national dialogue, communication and the exchange of information and experience in support of nfp's;
- Support participation and input on the part of developing nations in international processes (IFF, Convention on Biodiversity) and ensure effective feedback to the national stakeholders;
- Support the participation of countries in initiatives comparable to the Six-Country Initiative (using the revised *Practitioner's Guide*).

6.3 Support at global/regional level

Global and regional support should focus primarily on reinforcing national capacity and ensuring regional co-ordination between nations by improving the supply of information, pooling experience, and regional networks. The following activities might be considered:

- Support for the FAO in its role as promoter, information broker, intermediary and facilitator of nfp's. One important activity is gathering, analysing and disseminating national experience of nfp's and creating mechanisms and instruments allowing nations to share and discuss the experience they have gained (workshops, South-South and South-North networks¹³, web sites, nfp updates etc.). Such experience can be used to up-date the *Basic Principles and Operational Guidelines for nfp's* developed by the FAO and to make available resource materials such as case studies, thematic papers and training materials.
- Setting up of regional forest advisers groups in Latin America, Asia and Africa and the establishment of mechanisms for mutual co-ordination and exchange between the various regional groups. Such regional advisory groups would need to consist primarily of national experts who are directly involved in implementing nfp's in their own country. They might also include international experts involved in the nfp processes in the region concerned.
- Influence international financing institutions and instruments (WB, AfDB, AsDB, IADB, GEF) with respect to conceptual aspects and the use of nfp's as a framework for support.

6.4 Support for the nfp process in the Netherlands

As a signatory to the IPF Programme of Action, the Netherlands has also taken on the obligation of assessing how the current national forest policy and implementation mechanisms in the Netherlands relate to the nfp principles and IPF Proposals for Action, and, if necessary, adjusting it. On the basis of this position, it would be useful to institute a programme of activity together with a number of other countries (developing countries, Pan-European level), similar to that of the Six-Country Initiative.

¹³ This also would include advice by southern countries to northern countries on their national forest programme processes.

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ANNEX 1: SOME USEFUL ADDRESSES AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON NFP's, THE IPF/IFF PROCESS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL FOREST-RELATED PROCESSES

FAO Forestry Department

Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 Rome, Italy

Tel.: +39-06-57054778 Fax: +39-06-57052151

E-mail: forestry-www@fao.org

Internet: <http://www.fao.org/waicent/faoinfo/forestry/infonote/en/T-NFPe.htm> (information note on nfp's)

Internet: <http://www.fao.org/waicent/faoinfo/forestry/> (a large number of documents on nfp's can be identified by search function)

FAO Regional Office for Africa

PO Box 1628, Accra, Ghana

Tel.: +233-21-244051 Fax: +233-21-668427

E-mail: RAF@fao.org

Internet: <http://www.fao.org/regional/Africa/default.htm> (Contact on FAO's support for nfp's in the region)

FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Maliwan Mansion

39 Phra Atit Road, Bangkok 10200, Thailand

Tel.: +66-2-2817844 Fax: +66-2-2800445

E-mail: RAP@fao.org

Internet: <http://www.fao.org/regional/Asia/default.htm> (Contact on FAO's support for nfp's in the region)

FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

Av. Dag Hammarskjöld 3241

Vitacura, Santiago, Chile

Casilla 10095, Centro, Santiago, Chile

Tel.: +56-2-3372214 Fax: +56-2-3372101/2/3

E-mail: FAO-RLC@fao.org

Internet: <http://www.fao.org/regional/LAmerica/bosques/pfn-e.htm> (Contact on FAO's support for nfp's in the region)

Internet: <http://www.fao.org/regional/LAmerica/proyecto/> (Information on nfp's in Bolivia, Guatemala, Latin America Region and the Caribbean)

GTZ/TWRP Sectoral Project Support to International Programmes in Tropical Forestry

GTZ / OE 4544 – TWRP

P.O. Box 5180, D-65726 Eschborn, Germany

Phone: +49-6196-79-4209 Fax: +49-6196-79-7333

E-mail: marlene.steigerwald@gtz.de, doris.klein@gtz.de

Internet: <http://www.gtz.de/twrp> (Information and documents on nfp concept, national processes, IFF Six-Country Initiative, links to international forest policy processes)

Centre for International Forestry Research CIFOR

P.O. Box 6596, JKPWB, Jakarta 10065, Indonesia

Tel.: +62-251-622622, Fax: +62-251-622100

e-mail: cifor@cgiar.org

Internet: <http://www.cgiar.org/cifor/> (general information on CIFOR research activities, links and documents including forest policy)

Internet: <http://www.cgiar.org/cifor/research/projects/effect-crisis.html> (documents on impact of macro-level policy on forest sector)

European Forest Institute (EFI)

Torikatu 34, FIN-80100 Joensuu, Finland

Phone: +358-13-252-020 Fax: +358-13-124-393

E-mail: publications@efi.fi

Internet: <http://www.efi.fi/events/1999/nfp/> (Information on conference of Forest Policy Research Forum on nfp's)

Intergovernmental Forum on Forests:

Secretariat, Intergovernmental Forum on Forests

Division of Sustainable Development

Department of Social and Economic Affairs

United Nations

Two UN Plaza, 12th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10017

Tel +1-212-963-6208, Fax +1-212-963-3463

E-mail: hurtubia@un.org

Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/forests.htm> (Information on Intergovernmental Process, mandate, members, participation, national initiatives, institutions, interagency co-ordination under ITFF, IPF/IFF Reports, national reports on forests)

Internet: http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/forest/iff_directory.htm (Directory of forest-related international and regional institutions and instruments. Prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations on behalf of the ITFF)

International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Earth Negotiation Bulletin (ENB)

212 E. 47th St. Apt. 21F, New York, NY 10017

Tel: +1-212-644-0204 Fax: +1-212-644-0206

E-mail: enb@iisd.org

Internet: <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages> (ENB Reports on international events concerning forest policy and forest related processes)

Internet: <http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/iff4/index.html> (ENB Report of IFF 4)

World Bank

Environment Department

World Bank

1818 H Street, N.W.

Washington, DC 20433, USA

Tel.: +1-202-458-7867 Fax: +1-202-522-0367

<http://www.worldbank.org> (Information and various documents on World Bank Forest Policy Review Process, country case studies are included)

UNDP Programme on Forests (PROFOR)

United Nations Development Programme

UNDP/BDP/Sustainable Energy and Environment Division SEED

304 E 45th Street, 10th Floor

New York, N.Y. 10017

Tel.: +1-212-906-5088 Fax: +1-212-906-6973

UNDP PROFOR Vietnam

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development -

United Nations Development Programme

Programme on Forests (PROFOR) Viet Nam

2 Ngoc Ha, A9 105-106, Hanoi

Tel: +84-4-7336539 Fax: +84-4-7336623

e-mail: profor.vn@fpt.vn

Internet: <http://www.undp.org.vn/themes/forest/index.htm> (documents on UNDP PROFOR, its support for Vietnam's National Five Million Hectare Programme, studies of forest sector financing)

Annex 2: SOME COUNTRY AND REGIONAL EXPERIENCES

1. GENERAL

This annex covers the experience gained with national planning processes in a number of developing countries over the past ten to fifteen years. The reports are based on the individual knowledge and experience of a number of members of the Forests, Forestry and Biological Diversity Support Group. These accounts should therefore be seen not as up-to-date, comprehensive and systematic analyses, but rather as *personal impressions* which represent solely the views of the respective authors. On the whole, however, they provide a fair overview of the way in which individual processes have progressed, what the main issues have been, and what major lessons can be learned.

2. LATIN AMERICA

2.1 Plan De Acción Forestal Para Bolivia (Pafbol)

Author: Henk Lette

The National Forestry Action Plan for Bolivia (PAFBol) was already started in 1987, shortly after the launching of the TFAP. FAO was requested to provide assistance. The process was characterised by a rather donor-driven approach, in which mainly foreign consultants (financed by various donors) were contracted for periods of one or two months. The consultants usually focused on their own specific theme, leaving behind a report. The main donor countries involved in this process were Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands, with the FAO as the lead agency. In some cases, a local consultant was involved in the process. The results, brought together in an initial plan, were presented to the donor community in July 1989.

Because a new government (of a different political persuasion) was to be installed in August of that year, it soon became apparent that there was a major risk of the plan disappearing in a bureaucratic quagmire. At Bolivia's request, the FAO, the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland were found willing to formulate an implementation project which the new government could then present as an activity of its own. Because formulation of the project would take some time, the FAO approved an intermediate one-year project (financed from its own funds i.e. the Technical Co-operation Programme, TCP), thus ensuring that there was no gap between the presentation of the plan and its implementation. During that year, the plan was amended by the new government, but implementation had in fact already started, because the projects to which the donors had committed themselves concerned activities that had already been planned and pledged. However, the actual level of commitment of the donors to the projects appeared to be low, partly because each donor had its own interests and preferences, but also because it proved to be difficult to find adequate funding in the short term.

Reformulation of forest legislation was also commenced during this period. With strong backing from the FAO, a number of members of parliament and senators took the lead in this process of necessary adjustment, for which quite a broad dialogue process emerged. There was obviously considerable opposition from other political parties, especially from those with economic interests in the timber sector. After having gone through an interesting process, the proposed amendments never got beyond discussion in Parliament.

In the meantime, the first phase of the PAFBol support project, to be carried out by the FAO and funded by the Netherlands, was approved in 1992. This has four main aims:

- a. to establish a planning unit within the ministry responsible for forests so as to improve planning and policy-making;
- b. to promote institutional co-ordination both within and outside the forest sector;
- c. to establish a monitoring and evaluation system for activities within the forest sector; and
- d. to train staff.

During implementation of the plan 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 departmental

level, were considered as “national” activities. There was no support whatsoever for effective implementation. The subsequent PAFBol implementation project therefore gave high priority to the decentralisation of policy-making and planning. This new approach was adopted at the beginning of 1993 and received political backing after the change of government in August of that year, when government policy was redirected towards administrative decentralisation. The PAFBol could thus easily be embedded within the current political context.

During this phase of PAFBol, activities were primarily focused on the integration and decentralisation of planning and policy-making, the establishment of network structures and the integration of training into the planning. The overall goal was to improve communication within the forest and nature conservation sector, thereby creating a general feeling that the various parties concerned with forest issues (governmental, both the planning ministry as well as sectoral departments, NGOs, universities, industry and regional and local structures and representatives of the local population) could have a concrete say in planning activities. As a result of the participatory planning approach, there could also be input into policy-making, while the decentralised, multidisciplinary leaders of the planning activities could participate in training activities in various ways.

Proper communication proved to be a crucial factor in Bolivia to maintain the dynamics of planning, policy input and monitoring of activities. Training activities did not merely provide the participants with additional know-how, but also dealt with these communication aspects, allowing participants from the various organisations to put forward and exchange their various points of view and ideas. The publication of a three-monthly newsletter with news from the departments also improved communication and increased the feeling that all those involved were actively participating in planning the sector.

It was clear that the decentralisation policy would have to be further extended in order to cover the area between the departmental and local (or municipal) levels. The second phase of the implementation project was approved by mid-1996 and was entirely on a par with the existing political directions under which national financing became the responsibility of departmental and local structures. The second phase had to depend much more on national funding, given that international funding remained far below expectation.

Some factors that obstructed the implementation of the PAFBol at that time were:

- no true commitment by donors to accommodating national priorities (donors looked first at their own policy priorities);
- lack of capacity at various levels within the recipient country to adequately formulate projects;
- instability of governmental policy on the forest sector, including frequent changes of staff;
- low effectiveness of donor support due to a weak political/legal context;
- weak role of PAFBol as a mechanism at moments when truly important political matters are to be decided on (for example in the case of major funding to the sector from World Bank or Inter-American Development Bank (IBD); these decisions are made directly by political bosses without any PAFBol being consulted, as this gives them more freedom to fill in the loans according to their own political priorities).

After 1996, the institutional context underwent a major change. This was due to the approval, at long last, of the new Forest Act, which brought about many changes by placing sustainable forest management at the basis of all processes.

2.2 Plan De Acción Forestal Para Colombia (Pafc)

Author: Kees Van Dijk

The Forestry Action Plan for Colombia (PAFC) commenced as early as 1986. The Netherlands has been involved right from the outset as “Lead Agency” for the donors; the FAO has also been an important international participant. The following features are illustrative of the Colombian process.

Initially, Colombia was hesitant to participate in the TFAP, being afraid that it would impinge on the country’s sovereignty. It was felt that the PAFC should primarily be a national process, one for which

the country itself should be responsible. Substantial foreign interference was considered unacceptable and the role of foreign experts was primarily seen as that of suppliers of ideas and experience from elsewhere.

The relationship with the FAO was therefore an uneasy one, especially as the FAO intended to deploy a large team of foreign experts, whereas Colombia was set on implementing the PAFC itself. This difference in opinion caused much friction, up to the point that questions were even raised in parliament as to whether Colombia should leave the TFAP. Eventually, a number of FAO consultants were appointed to guide the process; they were not able to accomplish very much. The relationship with the Netherlands was good, not only because the Netherlands acted more as a confidant and a guide, but also because there were regular personal contacts and a good working relationship.

Colombia has taken the formulation of the PAFC seriously right from the start. An executive secretariat (SECTEC) was set up as early as 1989 and –when the funds pledged by FAO did not materialise– was sustained by Colombia itself. After 1991 the Netherlands took over the funding of the SECTEC. The SECTEC, which consisted almost entirely of Colombian experts, has had an extremely positive influence on the integration of the PAFC within the national institutional context. Crucial to this process was the fact that from the outset the PAFC was positioned at a high level within the National Planning Department (DNP). This produced major advantages in forest policy-making and in the process of setting priorities within budgets. There was also an apparent willingness at high governmental level to finance the process.

This was also of importance to the World Bank and the IDB, which were very interested in investing in forests in a relatively rich country like Colombia. Negotiations with both banks commenced in 1991 on a loan of US\$ 196 million, much more than other donors could supply. Participation on the part of banks is necessary so as to ensure a serious process, and the amount banks are willing to finance very much depends on the level of commitment of a country itself to taking out a loan and investing its own money in the process. Commitment at a high level within the government is necessary for such funding. Meanwhile Colombia had already invested large amounts of money in the process, but negotiations with the World Bank and the IDB proved to be lengthy and difficult, with mission after mission visiting the country. The conditions for loans for nature projects appear to be the same as those for an ordinary loan; besides, the banks also imposed a large number of additional social and environmental requirements, and timber exploitation or production, especially within primary forests, were not negotiable for inclusion within the portfolio. Moreover, each mission tended to be allergic to criticism from the NGOs. Meanwhile serious criticism was voiced within Colombia regarding the non-utilisation of funds available from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) (*for biodiversity conservation projects*), which are available free. The GEF process and the TFAP process appeared to be operating totally separate from each other, because the international organisations involved (the UNDP and the World Bank) were not able to co-ordinate their activities. Eventually, the funding proposals of the banks, as well as the PAFC itself, were approved in 1995 by the National Commission for Economic and Social Programmes (CONPES), the highest socio-economic body. This political commitment meant that the process was given high priority.

Nearly all other donors, however, pull back when it comes to providing funding. Most of them were unwilling to commit themselves to an entire plan; in practice, they wanted only to fund projects that were in line with their own priorities; at that time, projects on tropical rain forest and biodiversity conservation were the most popular. No one was willing to fund the production of timber or paper, or the establishment of plantations. The Netherlands, too, committed itself to supporting only a certain number of projects. Formulating and defining projects proved to be a long-term, complicated process, especially because adapting to the donor's wishes appears to be a complex matter.

Although on paper a participatory formulation process was intended, in practice it turned out not to be so; participation was limited largely to the major cities and especially to Bogota. Some attempts were made to regionalise the participation process, but this was successful to some extent only in Antioquia, where subsequently little was done with it. The NGOs were highly critical because they were insufficiently involved in the process. Although SECTEC has suffered considerably from this criticism, it has not taken much in the way of actual measures in practice.

When implementation of the World Bank and IDB projects started, SECTEC was made part of the newly created Ministry of the Environment and its function was reduced to a mere implementation office to manage the loans taken on by the government. The other committed projects were implemented by other organisations. This is still the situation at present.

The projects have had a considerable influence on the forest sector. In addition, the PAFChile discussion has also made a significant contribution to the way the subject of forests is dealt with in Colombia. Improvements are, however, still largely limited to the policy level in Bogota and to the areas where projects are implemented. Elsewhere little has changed as yet. To bring about effective changes in the forest situation of the regions will be a long-term process. Regionalisation and decentralisation would contribute to it.

2.3 Plan De Acción Forestal De Chile (Pafchile)

Author: Kees Van Dijk

The Chilean authorities, like their Colombian counterparts, found that they had to take on the work of preparing the action plan themselves. The explicit role FAO wished to play in the process was considered to be undesirable interference and as such problematical.

The Chilean forest sector is characterised by major disputes and conflicts between the powerful large-scale industrial sector on the one hand, and the governmental and non-governmental sector on the other. By presenting the plan at ministerial level, the co-ordinating unit of PAFChile attempted to counterbalance a one-sided emphasis on industrial development and to allow the government to regain some control of the sector. This strategy failed.

The sector analysis was carried out by a group consisting mainly of Chilean consultants. Within a few months the group produced a completely finalised plan, but it did so without consulting NGOs, the regions, or the forest sector. The results have not been good. In the case of Chile, the gap between the national consultants and the policy-makers in Chile turned out to be at least as wide as in other nfp processes in which international consultants made the plans. The process therefore still remained too much an "external" one without national support. The ministry itself should also have been much more involved in the preparation of these documents, and should at least have provided more guidance for the process. Some important reasons for the low level of commitment to the process were the low institutional positioning of the plan and the limited political interest in it.

The PAFChile, including the Netherlands-funded co-ordinating office, was incorporated into the National Forest Corporation (CONAF). Moreover, the director of CONAF was also the director of PAFChile. In practice there was no effective communication between PAFChile and the minister. The latter only became adequately informed when critical articles on PAFChile appeared in the press. Although the PAFChile was later adjusted to some extent, it has actually remained too much outside the ministry.

In retrospect, the insufficient efforts to create partnerships as a counterbalance to industry have been another important shortcoming of the process. There has been insufficient participation in the formulation process on the part of NGOs, small and medium-sized industries, and the various regions. The plan itself was perhaps not that bad at all, but the attempt to achieve too rapid results in a highly discordant atmosphere meant that none of the stakeholders was really satisfied. Eventually the plan was hardly implemented. Industry still refused to accept changes, the controversies between NGOs and industry appeared to be insurmountable, and the government was too weak to be able to decide on solutions, or to dare to do so. In the situation in Chile, conflict management ought to have played a major role. In that respect the Netherlands should perhaps have supported the process longer than it did, serving as a facilitator and mediator. This would only have been possible, though, if Chile's political authorities had also backed up the PAFChile process. However, this is hardly feasible as long as the dominant industrial sector opposes an integrated forest plan.

2.4 Plan De Acción Forestal Ecuador (Pafe)

Author: Kees Van Dijk

The first plan was drawn up in a relatively short time in 1990 and comprised 59 project profiles that were to be carried out between 1991 and 1995. Although the PAFE document was considered a sound one and donors were interested, actual implementation of the plan was rather disappointing. There was too little political support, and the subsequent frequent changes of government signified an equivalent number of changes in plans and priorities. The position of the PAFE within SUFOREN, the sub-secretariat for natural resources, also meant that it could not exert much political influence or generate much impact, and that political commitment to the plan was insufficient. One of the major problems within Ecuador is the weakness of governmental institutions; the frequent changes of personnel hinder the establishment of an adequate knowledge base and institutional memory. As in Chile, there were (and still are) many divergent opinions and conflicts on forests, and the government proved to have too little authority with respect to either the NGOs or the timber industry. The government failed to take up clearly defined positions and, despite bearing final responsibility for the forests, it refused to make choices and when choices were in fact made they were not followed up. In Ecuador, too, it turned out that –partly due to the speed with which they wished to draw up the plans– little effort was made to make the plans fit the specific situations and needs of the various regions. Moreover, major delays occurred in getting the funds which had been pledged by donors. Eventually, most parties involved lost interest in participating further in the PAFE.

After 1992, the PAFE was restructured and incorporated into INEFAN, the newly established Institute for Forests, Natural Areas and Fauna. A more direct link was established with the Directorate for Planning of the Department of Agriculture, which INEFAN comes under. However, this did not result in substantial improvements, especially not in implementation, since most of the problems already identified had remained unchanged. It was significant that the new government that took office in September 1998 was not fully aware of the actual status of PAFE, as a result of which Ecuador almost failed to meet some of the obligations to which it had committed itself.

In the case of Ecuador, but equally in many other countries, it is apparent –given the political instability and frequent changes of government– that a flexible and dynamic approach is required in which continual adaptation and negotiation with the various parties involved are central elements.

2.5 Plan De Acción Forestal De Peru (Pafn)

Author: Kees Van Dijk

An initial forest plan was drawn up in 1989 within a few weeks by a large group of national and foreign consultants. It turned out to be primarily a “shopping list” of projects, and implementation of the plan was problematical. There was soon a wide gap between financial commitment and actual implementation. It also turned out that much more time was required to formulate and start projects than was initially foreseen. Formulating projects and programmes and the subsequent procedures for approval often constitute a lengthy process. The manner in which this plan was established meant that there was no sense of true “ownership” of it within the Peruvian government. Although a special body charged with implementing the plan was established by law, it never had any influence at policy level, due to its low positioning within a non-influential forest service (which operates as a Directorate General within an Institute, INRENA). Various donors which had been involved in the formulation process eventually lost their commitment to the implementation process. Only Germany and the Netherlands made concrete pledges. Some donors attempted to gain influence on forest policy by providing a small amount of funding.

A new plan was drawn up in 1991, this time with the assistance of the UNDP and Switzerland. It turned out, however, that Peru’s priorities –which focused primarily on industrial development– were wholly different to those of the donors. Although the final plan incorporated a compromise which considered the wishes of the donors, in practice the Peruvian priorities were given precedence and the rest of the plan was marginalised. Implementation of the plan was largely a failure; only a few projects were successful and the Netherlands was one of the few serious donors. The failure of implementation was partly due to the political violence at the time, but also to low institutional embedding of the process and weak management on the part of the PAFN office.

Since 1996, attempts have been made to revitalise the PAFN. The Netherlands has pledged co-funding, on condition that the process is embedded at a high policy level within the Department of Agriculture. This has since taken place.

2.6 Plan De Acción De Costa Rica (Pafcr)

Author: Kees Van Dijk

The PAFCR was very ambitious and was carried out by the Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mines (MIRENEM). At first, the plan was biased towards the industrial sector; a significant financial contribution was also requested from donors. After a new government took office, the focus switched towards protection, but the PAFCR secretariat did not adapt to this new priority because civil servants appointed by the previous government continued to occupy the most important positions. Hence, PAFCR was a failure as a result of a combination of structural conflicts between the various organisations involved and the changing policies of subsequent governments. These conflicts meant that the PAFCR office has not had any significant influence, despite the fact that it was embedded at a high institutional level directly under the deputy minister. Implementation has therefore only taken place to a limited extent. Donors soon abandoned the plan and some even made separate agreements with the then government, by-passing the PAFCR.

2.7 Plan De Acción Forestal De Guatemala (Pafg)

Author: Kees van Dijk

Guatemala is a good example of a forest development plan in which much more time was devoted to enhancing the participation of all levels of society and types of institution than in many other national processes. The planning process already commenced in 1990 –guided by a Dutch-financed co-ordination office– and is still ongoing. Planning is regarded as a long-term, continuous process that requires permanent adjustment and negotiation. The preparation of a document is not regarded as the final stage in a process, but rather as the beginning.

The plan has clear support from the present government, which is also providing a considerable amount of funding. One advantage has been that the present minister was previously the co-ordinator of the PAFG; this has meant strong leadership for the PAFG, and it has also been important in preventing donor countries imposing their own agendas. Thanks to the strong leadership and the assertive position of the Guatemalteco, it is almost impossible for donors to by-pass the PAFG. Many participatory instruments have been developed as part of the PAFG. Guatemala is the first country in which an indigenous plan has been drawn up (PLANMAYA).

2.8 Plan De Acción Forestal Para Centro America (Pafca)

Author: Kees Van Dijk

This regional plan was carried out by the countries concerned under the auspices of the Comisión Centroamericana de Bosques (CCAB) and with support from Finland. The CCAB is regarded in the region as an important political body which influences the policy of the various countries. This has given it considerable influence in involving relevant bodies. A large number of ministers and under-ministers were usually present at the various Round Table meetings and consequently numerous donors and international organisations also attended. The general opinion of the countries was that a regional TFAP should focus primarily on policy rather than on implementation, and thus less on projects and programmes than on the main issues. However, various sensitive issues (colonisation, the timber industry and land ownership) were ignored. Nevertheless, this was the first time that a regional framework had been created for forest matters.

All in all, the PAFCA proved to be an interesting and influential programme of activity which resulted in collaborative action between countries in forest and nature conservation matters. The PAFCA also resulted in a number of important regional initiatives for co-operation and co-ordination, such as the

Central American Convention on Biodiversity, as well as a number of important policy development papers. Some important factors in the process have been the sound political embedding of the process (in the CCAB) and commitment on the part of the individual countries, the stimulating leadership of the CCAB, which produced valuable ideas, fruitful and periodic (personal) contacts and the availability of financial and other resources.

In Central America, the TFAP was seen as a negotiating instrument rather than as a straitjacket. This was also one of the reasons that the impact of the entire process was successful.

3. AFRICA

3.1 Zambia Forestry Action Plan (Zfap)

Author: Henk Lette

The necessity for Zambia to develop a National Forestry Action Plan was already recognised at an early stage of the global TFAP process. In 1989 the government of Zambia requested the FAO's assistance in starting a national programme of activity. The first mission was carried out in 1990 and contributed to the preparation of a draft "issue paper" that indicated an initial analysis of priorities and restrictions in the forestry sector.

Due to various political and financial restrictions, progress in developing a ZFAP was rather slow until in 1993 the Zambian government organised a national seminar, with support from FINNIDA (the Finnish Development Agency), in order to obtain a clear picture of the problems. One of the results was that the Netherlands and UNDP decided to provide financial resources for strengthening national capacity for strategic planning of the forest sector, to be included under the umbrella of the National Environmental Action Plan (in 1994). This plan was the successor to the National Conservation Strategy of 1985.

A project was formulated and financed by the Netherlands and UNDP. It was carried out by the Department of the Environment and National Resources, with assistance from the FAO ("Capacity Building for the ZFAP Planning Process"). This project became effective in April 1995. It was the intention of the government of Zambia to directly link it to the National Environmental Action Plan. However, this meant that the project did not gain the full support of the Forestry Department, which felt by-passed because the national co-ordinator had been made subordinate to the Planning Unit of the Department of the Environment. This caused a certain number of logistical problems.

The support project was intended to assist in the development of a flexible framework for the strategically important issues, interest groups, and perspectives for the development of the forest sector, in order to formulate policy changes and institutional reforms and short and long-term national action programmes, as well as mobilising funds. Another important task was to reinforce the capacity for formulating, implementing and monitoring participatory activities within the forest sector programme.

Simultaneously, three of the nine provinces of Zambia (also with the aid of FINNIDA) began to formulate provincial forestry action programmes. These provincial action programmes were meant to be directly linked to the national process, but during evaluation of the national process in July 1996 it turned out that there was much confusion as to the relationship between the provincial processes, the national process and the project that was intended to support the national process. As a result, an interactive discussion and planning process was started. In June and July 1999, a renewed national forestry action programme was presented at national and international level. It turned out that effective synergy had been created between the national level and activity at provincial level. A number of working papers were presented, the quality of which did not impress the donors who participated in the Round Table discussion. The participating donors and international organisations (UNDP, The Netherlands, the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), FINNIDA, Irish Aid, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), WWF, and IUCN) did not make yet any financial commitment, but this may have been due to the fact that the new Forestry Bill still had to pass through parliament. They obviously prefer to wait for the situation to become clearer before they are prepared to make the next move.

3.2 Plan De Accao Forestal De Cabo Verde (PAFCV)

Author: Reinout De Hoogh

Given that Cape Verde is a very small country, the PAFCV is more or less a mini-process. The first phase of the PAFCV process was largely supported by the FAO, with funding from Belgium and, during the final phase, the Netherlands. An inter-departmental working group was set up which regularly convened in Praia for consultations. A large number of supporting studies were carried out, mainly by foreigners. The conclusions of these studies were incorporated into the final synthesis paper on forest policy priorities. All these findings were duly finalised and collated in the Forest Action Plan, which formed part of the National Environmental Policy Plan. These plans were presented to the donors with a request that they should support their implementation. The main problem faced during the first phase was that the PAFCV was a centralised and not very participatory process. Contacts with people out in the field and on the various other islands were actually non-existent. Nobody was really aware that a PAFVC was ongoing.

During the second phase, which is currently entering its final year and which is again supported by FAO and financed by the Netherlands, implementation of the plan has been initiated; simultaneously, a large number of measures have been undertaken in order to create broader support and effective participation.

One of the most important results of the PAFVC is its contribution to mobilising the thinking and action in the forest sector. The PAFVC was instrumental in the creation of a new Forestry Act that now provides the basis for participatory forest management; this legislation links up well with the current decentralisation policy. Whereas past reforestation measures were characterised by centralised management employing farmers in working brigades, the aim is now for farmer associations to be given full responsibility for all implementation work, including tending and after-care, and for forest harvesting to also be organised in a participatory manner.

3.3 National Forestry Plan For Guinea Bissau

Author: Reinout De Hoogh

An initial national forestry plan was drawn up as early as the early nineties, but this was the subject of a great deal of criticism. The plan was drawn up more or less by the director of the forest service himself, with virtually no participation by other parties. The focus of the plan was on opportunities for forest exploitation. After a change of government in 1995, DGIS provided support, at the request of the FAO, for restructuring the plan, with special attention being paid to incorporating a participatory approach. Experience had already been gained with participation, but little use was made of it. The SNV community forest project in particular, which had already been operating in Guinea Bissau for many years, had achieved considerable results in this area. The project had also managed to establish good relations with the forest service, which basically showed an interest in the participatory approach. The paper was amended in 1996 on the basis of consultations which took place during workshops involving various stakeholders.

3.4 Plan D'action Forestier Du Sénégal (Pafs) And Plan D'action Forestier Regional (Pafr)

Author : Gert Jan Renes

As early as 1981, Senegal was the first country in the Sahel region to draw up a national forestry plan. This was entitled "Plan Directeur de Developpement Forestier" and focused primarily on the production of firewood and industrial timber. The PAFS planning process commenced in January 1990 with the support of FAO and UNDP. This process continued up to October 1993, when a Round Table III took place at which the Plan d'Action Forestier of June 1993 was discussed. The Netherlands played an important role in developing the plan, including through the funding of a number of preparatory studies.

The Forest Service –supported by the Netherlands and the FAO– played a crucial role both in the elaboration of the PAFS and in the further development of forest policy in Senegal. However, the level of financial resources made available to the Forest Service for implementation activities was rather small; after deduction of the salary costs and the contributions to externally co-financed development projects, hardly any funds remained available to implement activities by the PAFS by the Forest Service itself. A project financed by the Netherlands for co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of the PAFS did not get off the ground properly and –after three years– was incorporated into a central policy supporting and capacity building project.

Officially the PAFS was formulated within the framework of the Programme National d’Action de Lutte Contre la Desertification (PAN/LCD) and it was in harmony with other relevant policy plans such as national development plans and national and regional environment action plans and “Amenagement de Terroir” plans. The volume of available forest policy documents and plans produced in Senegal indicates that much effort has been expended on finding ways of introducing innovations into natural resources management. In practice, however, this has not always contributed to the formulation of clear policies; this has been partly due to the poor co-ordination between the various documents in particular with regard to the definition of the responsibilities and mandates of the (governmental) parties involved.

In Senegal, regionalisation –initiated at the national level since 1996– plays an important role. After a somewhat difficult start, regional *forestry* action plans (PAFR) were successfully set up in close collaboration with regional authorities. Regional action plans proved to provide a better framework for an intersectoral approach, which was insufficiently worked out in the original PAFS. As part of the field implementation programme “Gestion de Terroir Villageois” carried out by the Forest Service, the intersectoral approach functions quite well via the Agence Régionale de Développement

Elaboration of the PAFRs was carried out by means of the Programme National de Foresterie Rurale (PNFR), which has gradually provided the physical and conceptual support necessary to produce the PAFRs. The PAFRs are, in their turn, used as sectoral references for integrated regional development plans (PDRI), which are of major importance to the regions. It is the intention to update the PAFS on the basis of the PAFRs.

In July 1999 –after several years of preparation– the Dutch embassy in Dakar began to assist the Forest Service on the basis of a programme approach (the new “sectoral approach” taken by Dutch development co-operation). As part of this, the six forestry projects co-financed by the Netherlands will be phased out. This will give the Forest Service far more opportunity to define the contents of its own programmes using the PAFS or PAFR as the framework. Hence, PAFS and PAFR remain important to the Senegalese authorities. The programme approach offers the Forest Service better opportunities to use the PAFS and/or PAFRs more intensively. Due to the way in which the PAFRs have been drawn up, the regional authorities have developed “ownership” for the plans. As yet, however, it is too early to assess how successful implementation of the regional plans will be. For instance, it is not yet quite clear whether donors will work directly with regional authorities. There are also some donors who do not consider the PAFS as the primary reference for forest activities.

The multitude of laws, action plans and policy documents has regularly caused some confusion. Although the PAFS has not been updated since 1993, the PAFRs do comment critically on the PAFS; they also involve new policy aspects such as a participatory approach, “gestion du terroir villageois”, gender approach, “approche multi-media”, thematic and eco-geographic aspects etc.

Conclusion: The PAFS process got off to a good start and the regionalisation process, after some initial hiccups, also began well. Implementation has so far been limited, mainly as a result of insufficient co-ordination between the sectors concerned with natural resources and the high level of dependence of on external financiers which do not always use the PAFS as their reference. Nevertheless, the ongoing regionalisation processes are creating new opportunities.

4. ASIA

4.1 Sri Lanka Forestry Sector Master Plan (Slfsmp)

Author: Cathrien De Pater

An initial Forestry Master Plan (FMP) was drawn up in Sri Lanka in 1986 with the support of the World Bank and FINNIDA. This was a “classic” investment programme drawn up without participation; after completion, however, it was never implemented. In July 1993, a Forest Sector Development Project was started with the support of FINNIDA, the British Overseas Development Agency (ODA, currently Department for International Development or DFID), the World Bank and the UNDP/FAO. Within this project the FMP was reformulated as the Forestry Sector Master Plan (FSMP), with a revised National Forest Policy as its foundation. Both were approved by parliament in 1995. Each focuses on the conservation and sustainable management of forests, also concerning itself with trees outside actual forests, agroforestry, bio-energy and NTFPs. Empowerment of the rural population and forest management in partnership with them is the principal strategy, given that the government is unable to manage the forests on its own. In order to attract the interest of donors, the FSMP was further operationalised in the form of an Indicative Five-Year Implementation Plan (FYIP) including a tentative budget. This was followed at a later stage (1997) by a detailed FYIP. The costs were estimated at US\$ 33 million, of which 58% was required for a Forest Land Allocation and Macro-level Zoning Component.

During the process of formulating both the FSMP and the FYIP, there was a great deal of room for participation by the parties involved: NGOs, universities, research institutes and grassroots organisations. Their participation was at first overwhelming, but enthusiasm later waned. Although most of those involved found that the plans were formulated on a sufficiently broad and innovative basis (“empowerment”), implementation did not really get off the ground. The obstacles identified are: 1) out-dated legislation which needs to be revised in order to give participatory management a legal basis (this may take years); 2) the necessary reclassification of forest areas; although already established on paper, the areas still have to be actually demarcated physically in the field; 3) the out-dated institutional set-up of the Forest Department and an education and research sector which must be equipped for its new tasks.

Some attempts were made to get implementation going: DIFD initiated a pilot project in 1997 for participatory forest management in the south of the country. This was stopped in October 1998 because of non-compliance on the part of the Sri Lankan government. Within the field of conservation, IUCN (with the support of FAO) had already commenced drawing up management plans in 1995 for 13 forest areas in the humid zone. A project proposal was written for the implementation of three of these areas and submitted to the Netherlands for funding. This proposal was rewritten in 1998 and a one-year preparatory phase was included as a precondition for further financing. In the meantime, it appeared that many old hand donors (the World Bank, FINNIDA, DFID) were slowly drawing back because of a lack of results in the field. Other organisations took over from them. The Asian Development Bank, for instance, now has a stock of project proposals worth a total of US\$ 130 million in the “green” sector, \$ 30 million of which is intended for biodiversity activities.

According to the Institute for Policy Studies in Colombo, the politicisation of Sri Lankan society is largely to blame for the discrepancy between, on the one hand, the failing implementation in the field and, on the other, progressive policy-making at a central level. In this way central policy is distorted “on the way down” because of political interests. This problem has been insufficiently recognised by the policy makers, policy advisors and donors. FAO, too, stresses that it is necessary to mobilise the partners in the FSMP through improved donor co-ordination, strengthening of advocacy and extension.

4.2 Pakistan Forestry Sector Master Plan

Author: Cathrien De Pater

Pakistan's Forestry Sector Master Plan (FSMP) was the first long-term policy document for the forest sector. It was based on twenty Background Papers drawn up in the period 1991-93 under the supervision of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and with the support of a number of donors. The Netherlands financed a study on pasture lands. A general shortcoming of all the studies was the absence of a quantitative basis; this was due to all kinds of technical and organisational problems. Another problem was the institutional positioning of the plan within the office of the Inspector General of Forests (IGF) at a federal level; this office has only very limited authority with respect to the provinces which are in charge of implementation. The participation of the provinces, let alone the sub-regional bodies and NGOs, was therefore rather limited. This was quite different in the case of the National Conservation Strategy (NCS) prepared some time later by IUCN Pakistan, in which an extensive consultative process indeed turned out to be possible.

The FSMP was adopted in 1993 and the NCS in 1995. In both cases, the proposal was to apply the national documents at provincial level. This was actually done, but the provincial FSMPs have never in fact provided direction for implementation in the provinces. However, the two main donors, ADB and the World Bank, initiated sector projects in the most important provinces: North Western Province (ADB) and the Punjab (WB).

The FSMP comprised the following programme groups: 1) forest management and timber production; 2) Soil conservation and watershed development; 3) Eco-systems and biodiversity; 4) Policy and institutional reinforcement. Rather ambitious physical targets were drawn up, such as 94% self-sufficiency in timber demand and reforestation of 9.8% of total land area, a doubling of the current situation. The total cost over 25 years was estimated at Rs 48 billion (approx. US\$ 2 billion), 68.8% of which would have to be provided by public funding and the rest by the private sector. Over in the first five years, the targets have in any case not been achieved. This was partly due to administrative problems but also because public funds often came too late and/or were insufficient. Initially, the latter was partly because the FSMP required a significant increase compared to normal public expenditure on forests, which since 1955 had been allocated on the basis of five-year plans. In the late nineties, implementation also suffered from overall cutbacks in the government budget as a result of the country's political and economic crisis. The plan aimed at doubling the number of forest workers, but in fact the figure dropped sharply.

The contents of the FSMP focused largely on issues of supply and demand (for firewood and other forest products), but it ignored the important developments in the area of social forestry that were taking place at the time. From this angle, it became clear that local rights, good governance and community action, and –most importantly– a fundamental reform of the forestry institutions were crucial for achieving sustainable forest management. The FSMP did not adequately respond to these issues because it was not intended as an operational planning document but rather as a general framework for investment. Around 1996, an institutional reform process was commenced in NWFP with support from a number of donors, including the Netherlands, but progress was slow. The FSMP was evaluated in March 1999 and new guidelines for the future were drawn up. As long as the institutional reforms are not pursued, a increasingly smaller number of donors will be inclined to invest in the outdated institutions.

Annex 3: THE SWEDISH CASE

Source: Persson (1998)

.....In the middle of the last century Sweden was still a very poor and peripheral country. Compared to the needs of the rapidly growing population, agriculture was still rather old-fashioned and inefficient, industrial development was in its infancy. Living conditions, especially in the rural areas, were harsh and hunger as well as periodic famine formed part of the regular pattern of life. Land degradation was severe in many parts of the country and deforestation was both wide-spread and increasing; the once so impressive Swedish forest cover seemed to be irreversibly disappearing.....

.....The main reason behind these dramatic events was the increasing demand from England, the industrial super-power of Europe, a demand that had already almost depleted accessible Norwegian forests. Within a few decades, Swedish forest companies began to feel the effects of the first stage of the very same problem: forests of good quality no longer existed close to roads or waterways.

This mismanagement and over-exploitation of the forests soon began to cause concern in leading circles, and in the 1850s the theme was repeatedly addressed by the Swedish Parliament. One speaker justified determined intervention by the State with the following words: *“Everyone uses the forest but still nobody looks after it”*. In 1855 a special Parliamentary Commission was thus set up to look into the problem and to propose adequate measures to prevent wide-spread shortage of wood in the country. The export boom based on mature and fairly easily accessible forests was still at its peak, however, and against these forces (which included widespread corruption) the Commission could do little. No agreement on substantial measures could be reached and for the next fifty years the situation remained almost the same. Deforestation continued and began to cause growing problems as well as public concern, and in Parliament the need for new legislation as well other regulatory measures by the State was almost continuously discussed –but when it came to decisions almost nothing was achieved.

By the end of the 19th century, Sweden’s forest resources were at an all-time low and most forest-related industries had begun to experience rising costs and scarcity of raw material. In southern Sweden, local organisations of concerned citizens gained support and took the initiative to plant forests on degraded areas covered by heath land. Now, the time seemed ripe for radical and innovative measures and in 1896 a new Parliamentary Commission was established to analyse the situation and make proposals for a new forest policy. In practical terms the work of the Commission –which continued for seven full years– came to constitute a kind of National Forestry Plan, with all the principal parties taking part in the process.

The result was entirely new forestry legislation, adopted by Parliament in 1903, and the creation of a new organisation, County Forestry Boards, for supervision and extension activities in the field of forestry. The new Forestry Act established that every owner of forest land must guarantee satisfactory regeneration after felling, either by re-planting or by natural regeneration.

Continuous supervision was undertaken by the County Forestry Boards, which also provided incentives and technical assistance for regeneration measures as well as for activities within other parts of the forestry cycle (thinning, management plans). The County Forestry Boards acted within the framework of national rules and regulations, but were truly locally-based organisations, thus constituting a radical break with the traditional top-down model of State and public bodies.

The general philosophy of this new policy was simple and straightforward; the forests constituted a key asset for Sweden’s economic and social development and should thus be managed in a way that did not jeopardise the future availability of this resource. The new Forest Act established the framework and provided a legal means of dealing with the “black sheep”; economic incentives and assistance through the County Forestry Boards would promote correct behaviour among all the others.

This approach soon showed itself to be very successful. Forestry became an increasingly important activity among Swedish farmers and the forest industry continued to grow, but felling was carried out

in a planned manner and never exceeded regeneration. In spite of an efficient system of supervision, almost nobody had to be brought to court for violations of the law; it now paid to play by the rules. Within a few decades, trees had become a valuable crop that must be sown, managed and harvested like all the others –though, due to their long growth cycle, with a little more fore-sight and planning. These, almost revolutionary, changes regarding forest management were also helped by coinciding reforms to improve land tenure security and the modernisation of agriculture, resulting in increased efficiency which meant that less land was needed to feed more people. Through the development of forestry a very considerable number of small farmers gained a chance to improve their miserable living conditions and leave poverty behind. All were not winners, of course, in this period of dramatic change, but on the whole it was no doubt a positive development and the role of forestry in the impressive, socio-economic development of the Swedish countryside during the first half of this century can hardly be over-estimated.

What, then, are the conclusions to be drawn from the successful Swedish case, and what relevance –if any– do these conclusions have when it comes to international forestry assistance?

Within the Swedish context, I would like to emphasise the following conclusions:

- Increasing demand for wood (and increasing fear of wood scarcity) mainly from the forest industries meant that forests achieved a value
- Improvements in agriculture led to higher yields and better efficiency per area unit, thereby reducing the need for clearing forest land for cultivation
- Due to tenure conditions and political circumstances, small farmers could also benefit from improvements in agriculture which contributed to the stabilisation of land-use patterns
- Migration and urbanisation led to reduced pressure on cultivable land in the rural areas
- Well-defined and secure tenure and usufruct rights to the forest and its products constituted a prerequisite for the development of sustainable forestry
- Most social groups and economic actors gradually developed a common interest in protecting the forests and developing a system for sustainable forestry
- The consensus achieved among the principal parties was thus built on the convergence of self-interest, expressed a national political will and was reinforced by the new forest legislation; which was why the new legislation became effective (a mere top-down approach would have achieved very little result)
- Profits from the forestry sector were re-invested in the country and foreign capital was also attracted to invest - and re-invest.

Most of these conclusions are, in my opinion, also relevant to the discussion regarding international forestry assistance to developing countries. Under certain conditions the development of forest industries may thus become an efficient instrument to halt deforestation, whereas improvement of a country's agriculture (understood as higher and more secure yields for small-scale farmers also) will often have the same effect by stabilising land-use patterns and reducing the demand for new farmland.

Furthermore, well-defined and secure tenure and/or usufruct rights to the land and its crops (including trees) are of crucial importance in the developing world today to enable improvements and more far-sighted land management systems within small-scale agriculture as well as forestry development. Finally, the existence of a genuine and firm domestic will, based on converging interests among the principal parties is no doubt a pre-condition for the real success of any sizeable undertaking financed by international assistance.

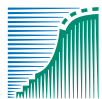
History Revisited - What If Sweden Had Received Forestry Assistance?

In the 1860s, the situation in Swedish forests was critical and deforestation continued due to different and powerful forces. What would have been the impact in this period if foreign advisors from, for instance, Germany or Japan had arrived, expressing their concern and interest for supporting initiatives aimed at controlling the exploitation of remaining forests and starting forest regeneration programmes?

Support to education and research could probably have produced some result –but not in the short run. Support to the strengthening of forest institutions and forest administration could possibly have achieved some positive results as well –but would it have been sustainable?

Foreign assistance for the elaboration of new forestry legislation would most probably have yielded very limited results. Support to local organisations propagating tree planting might have speeded up the process –but it could also have undermined any individual and private initiative/mobilisation. The same goes for support to the national forestry organisations that already existed but were still very young.

Foreign assistance for the County Forestry Boards (established at the turn of the century) could also have resulted in less local commitment and participation– and more of a centralist top-down approach, which would have been counter-productive. By that time, however, Sweden had already forged its own platform



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en visserij

Wageningen, june 2000



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