

Synergistic policies and measures are the key to advancing sustainable forest management and forest-based development

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Prerequisite conditions for SFM

This brief presents the main findings of the new book **Forests under pressure –Local responses to global issues**⁽¹⁾ published by the International Union of Forest Research Organization's Special Project World Forests, Society and Environment (IUFRO WFSE).

The book is the result of a collaborative work of 144 scientists and experts who acted as authors in different capacities.

Considerable attention has been devoted to advancing sustainable forest management (SFM), but deforestation and forest degradation continue and pressures on forestlands increase. The sustainable management of forests is vital for achieving sustainable development. It also plays a key role in mitigating and adapting to climate change and ensuring the provision of essential ecosystem services. The book identifies conditions that foster or hinder progress towards SFM and forest-related development, based on the analysis of 27 case studies from different parts of the world. The cases include forest manage-

ment, integrated management of mosaics of agriculture and forests, agroforestry and secondary forests. They were studied using a common analytical framework of prerequisite conditions to evaluate the implementation of SFM. The analysis demonstrates how prerequisite conditions and combinations of conditions foster or constrain progress towards SFM and how that contributes to local development and forest conservation.

The conditions that influence SFM originate at different scales, from local to global, and are commonly influenced by actors and initiatives from

(1) Katila, P., Galloway, G., de Jong, W., Pacheco, P., Mery, G. (eds.) 2014. *Forests under Pressure - Local Responses to Global Issues*. IUFRO World Series Volume 32. 561 p. The book is available for download at: www.iufro.org/wfse.



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non-forest economic or political sectors. Thus, when SFM is being pursued, interdisciplinary approaches that focus on the diversity of conditions affecting resource management across scales are more likely to succeed. In the common analytical framework used to analyse the case studies, the conditions were assigned to four groups: *policies, institutions and governance (1)*; *liveli-*

hoods, capacities, cultural and socio-economic aspects (2); *natural resource base (3)*; and *research and monitoring (4)* (Figure 1). While presented as different groups, in practice conditions are sometimes difficult to categorise and they interact in complex ways.

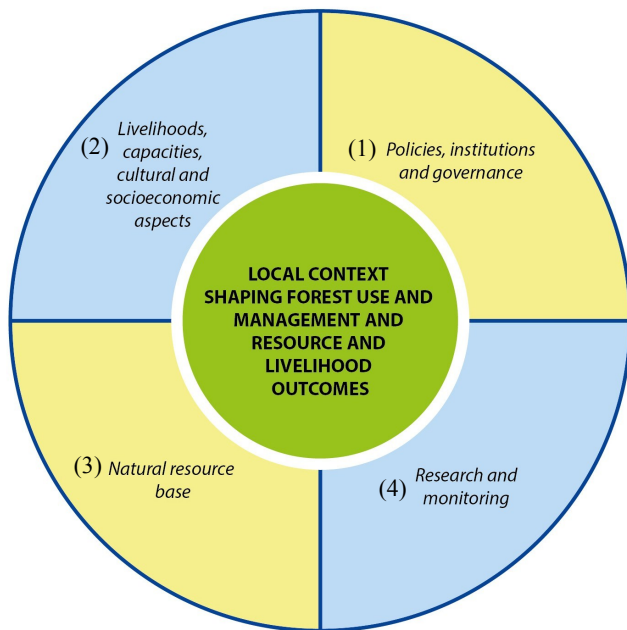


Figure 1. Analytical framework for the case studies: (1) Including: land tenure and rights to forests and trees; public administration; participation and stakeholder cooperation; issues of power and representation; enforcement of laws and regulations; reconciliation of different land uses; long-term societal commitment to SFM.

(2) Including: contribution of forests and forest resources and services to livelihoods; commercial opportunities, linkages to markets, value chains; technical and managerial leadership; access to capital; security and conflict; the role of industrial forestry; landscape or ecosystem management.

(3) Including: the extent and condition of forest resources; trees outside forests; agroforestry.

Main findings from the case studies

The case studies indicate that in many locations progress has been made in fostering some prerequisite conditions that positively influence SFM, such as “tenure reform” and “participation in relevant decision making”. Progress has been less widespread with other important conditions that also facilitate SFM such as “enforcement of laws and regulations,” “reconciliation of different land uses,” “commercial opportunities, linkages to markets,” “security and conflict,” and the creation of a “public administration” that fosters rather than constrains SFM. Indeed, in many locations where SFM is being pursued, progress with these conditions in particular is still fraught with major challenges. The principal findings from the analysis of the case studies are:

- ◆ Forests and trees continue to make important contributions to local livelihoods. But the extent

and condition of forests are in clear decline or at risk because of deforestation and forest degradation, jeopardising these contributions over time.

- ◆ Changes in land tenure or use rights generally favour local actors, and stakeholder cooperation and participation have progressed. But, local actors have not been adequately empowered to take part in crucial decisions regarding forest management and use.
- ◆ The enforcement of laws and regulations continues to be a major challenge (e.g. control of illegal logging).
- ◆ Public administration related to SFM has improved widely. But, complex bureaucratic regulations, problems of transparency, and other unfavourable administrative practices constrain local involvement in SFM.

- ◆ The reconciliation of different land uses is one of the principal challenges facing SFM. Local actors may prefer to convert forests to other land uses or in other cases governments have encouraged foreign investment in agricultural and extractive ventures.
- ◆ The improvement in commercial opportunities for forest products and services continues to be weak, and few examples show the integration of primary producers into lucrative value chains.
- ◆ Capacity-building efforts are fragmented with important gaps. Capacity-building and technical assistance often depend on external funding, which affects continuity of these services.
- ◆ Capital for investment in forestry operations and rural enterprises is either lacking or is derived from informal channels, increasing costs and risks.
- ◆ Problems of security and conflict negatively influence efforts to advance SFM.
- ◆ The effort devoted to research does not correspond to the broad knowledge and information demanded by SFM.

- ◆ Monitoring to track the implementation and emerging outcomes of SFM is not pursued in a systematic fashion or the information gathered is not effectively used.



A log is processed to add value and facilitate transportation by members of a community forest enterprise in Quintana Roo, Mexico.

Interaction among conditions is crucial

- ◆ **Alignment among different sectoral policies and policy implementation favours positive outcomes**, as do policies that recognise and build on strong communal institutions based on long-term cultural and economic links with forest resources. Conflicting policies result in negative interactions. For example, policies that promote large-scale investment in agriculture and mining are often incompatible with the goals of SFM and fail to take into account impacts on local livelihood strategies.
- ◆ **Unclear and/or insecure rights to forest and trees undermine the effectiveness of policies** put in place to promote SFM. Often formally recognised local rights to land and forests have not been implemented in a systematic fashion. **Lack of empowerment and/or exclusion from deliberations on forest management and decision-making further curtail participation in SFM.**
- ◆ **Onerous bureaucratic processes for approval of management plans and harvesting permits discourage participation in SFM.** Policies to promote small-scale and community-based forest management are ineffective when arbitrary restrictions are placed on timber harvesting and commercialisation. High transaction costs and inconsistencies in the way forest regulations are applied impact negatively the effectiveness of policies that promote SFM.
- ◆ Even when considerable efforts have been made to establish favourable policies and encourage community involvement, **corruption and illegality greatly diminish progress towards SFM. Weak and ineffective institutions often also undermine favourable policies.**
- ◆ **Deficient technical and managerial capacities and lack of linkages between producers and attractive market opportunities exacerbate the negative impacts** of failing to align policies or their poor implementation.

The way forward

Flexibility and more holistic policies and approaches are the key

There is no common recipe for success in promoting SFM. Responding to the diversity of situations found in different contexts requires a certain degree of flexibility. A more holistic understanding is essential of the context in which SFM is being pursued, including the interacting processes and emerging trade-offs affecting SFM. More comprehensive policies and approaches are required to address key issues in local contexts and to generate positive synergies among conditions for SFM.



Globalised markets and investments can support sustainable forest-related development

Globalisation of markets and investments steer forest-related developments in many countries. It can lead to large-scale land concessions to the detriment of local forest-related development and livelihoods. But these processes can also lead to employment creation in forest-related production or forest-based services. The local context and preconditions for SFM shape the impacts of globalisation on local forest management and sustainable forest-related development. Synergistic interaction among the conditions that originate at different scales is possible when these conditions support sustainable forest-related development.

Monitoring of outcomes is important for adaptive policies and management

The advancement of SFM requires that careful attention be focused on how effects and pressures originating from different scales interact and how these interactions impact local livelihoods and forest conditions. Outcomes of SFM should be monitored on a continuous basis to detect positive and negative interactions among prerequisite conditions and the mechanisms whereby these interactions lead to changes in local livelihoods and forest conditions. In like manner, policies and measures that may influence the prerequisite conditions for SFM should be tracked, recognising that adjustments to policies will be required over time to bolster conditions favorable for SFM.

WFSE network

IUFRO WFSE is an open, independent network of scientists and practitioners steered by 10 international research organisations, involving over 100 researchers from throughout the world. It supports sustainable natural resources management, sustainable development and inclusive growth as well as related policy processes, focusing principally on two main efforts: 1) collating, critically analysing, and synthesising existing scientific knowledge on topics of international relevance in the forest, society and environment interface in order to draw out important lessons learned and recommendations and 2) undertaking new research to fill in crucial gaps in existing knowledge. WFSE addresses these topics in a cross-sectoral, holistic and interdisciplinary fashion, encouraging innovative approaches and anticipating conditions that will influence future forest-related development at different scales, from local to global.

IUFRO WFSE partner organisations are CATIE (Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center), CIAS (Centre for Integrated Area Studies, Kyoto University), CIFOR (Center for International Forestry Research), CIRAD (Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement), EFI (European Forest Institute), FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), Metla (Finnish Forest Research Institute), von Thünen Institute of International Forestry and Forest Economics, University of Florida, and VITRI (Viikki Tropical Resources Institute, University of Helsinki).

More information and all WFSE publications are available at: www.iufro.org/wfse.