

IUFRO



SPOTLIGHT

International Union of Forest Research Organizations

Union Internationale des
Instituts de Recherches
Forestières

Unión Internacional
de Organizaciones de
Investigación Forestal

Internationaler
Verband Forstlicher
Forschungsanstalten

IUFRO Spotlight is an initiative of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations. Its aim is to introduce, in a timely fashion, significant findings in forest research from IUFRO officeholders and member organizations to a worldwide network of decision makers, policy makers and researchers. IUFRO will encapsulate, and distribute in plain language, brief, topical and policy-relevant highlights of those findings, along with information on where/how to access the full documents.

IUFRO Spotlight also aims to present activities such as sessions at major IUFRO congresses or the work of IUFRO Task Forces with a focus on emerging key issues that are of great interest to policy makers and groups inside and outside the forest sector and contribute to international processes and activities. The IUFRO Spotlight findings will be distributed in a periodic series of emails as well as blog postings.

IUFRO Spotlight #87 / March 2021

Getting everyone on board to succeed in forest landscape restoration

The world is degraded. Worldwide, according to a 2018 UNESCO publication, land degradation affects 3.2 billion people – about 40% of humanity.

The degradation is human caused, drives species extinction, intensifies climate change, and adds to mass human migration and increased conflict, the report indicated.

So, a critical question becomes: how do we build or, perhaps more accurately, rebuild a sustainable world?



*Alignment and planting in SMM Komitibanda.
Photo: Forest College & Research Institute, Telangana, India*

IUFRO, through its Special Programme for Development of Capacities (SPDC), offers a significant part of the solution by emphasizing Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR).

The FLR is designed as a multi-stakeholder process that aims at regaining, improving and maintaining vital ecological functions and enhancing human wellbeing. And, other studies have shown that about 15% of degraded land worldwide is suitable for FLR.

The SPDC is headed by Dr. Michael Kleine, deputy executive director of IUFRO. Its mandate is to build capacity in the forest science community in economically disadvantaged countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America so that forest science can contribute to the enhancement of sustainable management of forest landscapes.

SPDC trains forest scientists and practitioners in FLR so they are better able to manage and deal with the complex issues involved in land management. To that end, the Programme has also developed guidance (in English/Spanish/French) for the FLR process.

Training covers a wide array of FLR-relevant topics ranging from global policies and governance issues to project planning, facilitation of multi-stakeholder processes and implementation and monitoring of technical operations on the ground.

FLR looks beyond the immediate forest area and identifies a broad range of measures to improve the ecosystem: things like soils, nutrients, tree cover and biodiversity. The aim is to build resilient landscapes and to generate maximum benefits for local stakeholders and society at large.

Restoration is certainly not a quick-and-easy fix. To be successful, everyone involved has to be on the same page. And that means all the competing interests around land use must come together and work collaboratively to achieve that common goal.



Landscape in Ethiopia recovering from degradation. Photo: Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute

“Our past experiences show that sectoral approaches – agriculture-only; forestry-only; biodiversity conservation-only – will not solve the complex and interlinked problems of land management,” said Dr. Kleine.

In many partner countries land degradation is severe and widespread, and restoration will be a task for many years to come. So, capacities there must be enhanced to help shape a more sustainable world.

“Our solution for restoring degraded landscapes is to encompass different land uses – forestry, agriculture, wildlife, recreation, water management, etc. FLR, as the name implies, takes a landscape approach aimed at reconciling the many varied expectations and conflicting societal demands that revolve around the natural environment,” Dr. John Stanturf, retired Senior Scientist with the US Forest Service and SPDC’s lead trainer said.

“The collaborative effort among stakeholders needs to be facilitated or moderated by those trained in FLR,” said Janice Burns, IUFRO’s Thematic Networking Manager and SPDC’s deputy coordinator. “These facilitators, by understanding the FLR process, can work at the local level to help all stakeholders – farmers, staff from forestry and agriculture departments, green NGOs, politicians, indigenous people – to jointly decide on measures to improve land management.

The process provides a systematic framework for stakeholder consultations, enhances transparency, mobilizes political and financial support and, in this way, eventually leads to joint decisions.

“It’s essentially a multi-stakeholder process whereby different stakeholders with an interest in forests and land use jointly decide about measures to improve the ecological, social and economic condition of the landscape,” added Dr. András Darabant of Vienna’s University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences and a member of the SPDC trainer team.

There are certainly challenges. In addition to competing interests, in some instances there is a lack of transparency, or inequalities among affected segments of society, and occasionally there is corruption; all of which is compounded by global trade arrangements, and investment policies by rich countries.

“But we want to make available a critical mass of FLR facilitators within a country who can help guide the joint stakeholder decision making, the implementation and collaborative monitoring of the outcome and the improvements,” Dr. Kleine said.

The success of the initiative will be seen in a more diverse and resilient landscape, with less soil erosion, a diversity of plants and vegetation, productive soils for food and material production and an ability to adapt to a changing climate and associated risks.

The IUFRO-SPDC FLR guidelines can be found at:

<https://www.iufro.org/science/special/spdc/netw/flr/flr/pract-guide/>

Further reading:

John A. Stanturf, Michael Kleine, Stephanie Mansourian, John Parrotta, Palle Madsen, Promode Kant, Janice Burns & Andreas Bolte, 2019. Implementing forest landscape restoration under the Bonn Challenge: a systematic approach. *Annals of Forest Science* volume 76, Article number: 50 (2019)
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13595-019-0833-z>

IUFRO Occasional Paper No. 33 (2020) - Forest Landscape Restoration Implementation: Lessons learned from selected landscapes in Africa, Asia and Latin America
<https://www.iufro.org/publications/series/occasional-papers/article/2020/02/14/occasional-paper-no-33-forest-landscape-restoration-implementation-lessons-learned-from-selected/>

Daniella Schweizer, Marijkevan Kuijk, JabouryGhazoula (2021)
[Perceptions from non-governmental actors on forest and landscape restoration, challenges and strategies for successful implementation across Asia, Africa and Latin America | Initiative 20x20](#). *Journal of Environmental Management*, Volume 286, 15 May 2021, 112251

The findings reported in IUFRO Spotlight are submitted by IUFRO officeholders and member organizations. IUFRO is pleased to highlight and circulate these findings to a broad audience but, in doing so, acts only as a conduit. The quality and accuracy of the reports are the responsibility of the member organization and the authors.

Suggestions for reports and findings that could be promoted through IUFRO Spotlight are encouraged. To be considered, reports should be fresh, have policy implications and be applicable to more than one country. If you would like to have a publication highlighted by Spotlight, contact: Gerda Wolfrum, IUFRO Communications Coordinator, [wolfrum\(at\)iufro.org](mailto:wolfrum(at)iufro.org)

The International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) is the only worldwide organization devoted to forest research and related sciences. Its members are research institutions, universities, and individual scientists as well as decision-making authorities and other stakeholders with a focus on forests and trees. Visit: <http://www.iufro.org/>

IUFRO Spotlight #87, published in March 2021, by IUFRO Headquarters, Vienna, Austria. Available for download at:

<http://www.iufro.org/media/iufro-spotlights/>

If you wish to unsubscribe from IUFRO Spotlight, please email us at: [office\(at\)iufro.org](mailto:office(at)iufro.org)

Imprint: <http://www.iufro.org/legal/#c18944>



**21 March
International Day of Forests**