Center for International Forestry Research

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Call for Expressions of Interest for Systematic Maps and Reviews
The Evidence-Based Forestry Initiative
<u>**Submission Deadline: 15 February 2016**</u>

Background

The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and partner research institutions have key roles in generating evidence for policy processes, both through targeted research and through building the body of relevant knowledge. However, while other sectors have well-established procedures for using systematic approaches to identify and consolidate research findings, transparent methods for assessing a body of evidence have been used only rarely to inform decision-makers in the forestry and landscapes arena.

The Evidence-Based Forestry (EBF) initiative aims to strengthen the forestry community's capacity for evidence-based decision making through the promotion of systematic maps and reviews, which identify the best available evidence on specific research and policy questions by using transparent and pre-defined procedures to find, evaluate and synthesize the results of pre-existing research. This process ensures that reviews can be updated as new relevant information emerges, and minimizes biases that may be present in existing literature reviews used by decision-makers. To date, the EBF initiative has supported 18 systematic maps and reviews on diverse topics; more information on these reviews can be found on the EBF website.

In 2014, the EBF initiative held a global consultation of scientists, practitioners, students and policy-makers to identify priority research and policy questions in forestry, broadly defined to reflect the wide scope of CIFOR and partners' work across the spectrum of forests and landscapes, their values and services, their governance, and their contributions to sustainable development. The process resulted in the identification of the Top 20 Questions in Forestry and Landscapes, presented in Annex 1 by theme.

Expressions of Interest

The EBF initiative invites researchers to submit Expression of Interest (EOI) for systematic reviews and maps on critical areas for forestry policy and practice, including but not limited to those that draw upon the Top 20 Questions for Forestry and Landscapes.

CIFOR will provide co-funding of up to USD 35,000 for each systematic map or review[1] with the expectation of financial and in-kind contributions from the selected research teams. Preference will be given to proposals that are integrated within existing or planned research projects, and which demonstrate the potential importance this research has for forestry policy and practice. The proposed maps or reviews must have a CIFOR researcher as the principal or a co-principal investigator.

Please note the following considerations for deciding whether a systematic map or review is appropriate:

- Where there is large amount of research on a topic but where key questions remain unanswered;

- When there is uncertainty about effectiveness of a policy/service AND where there is some existing research;
- In early stages of policy development to assess likely effects of interventions;
- To generally survey evidence on a topic or explore evidence gaps for future research;
- To assess past methodologies as part of new method development.

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[1] A maximum of five systematic map or reviews will be funded.

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Further Details

The EOI should provide a clear presentation of the importance of the research question in relation to global, national, or sub-national forestry and landscape discussions, with a persuasive argument about how this review will contribute to clarifying uncertainties or conflicts in the existing body of knowledge. EOIs should be organized around the following sections:

Research question: This should indicate the topic and scope of the proposed map or review.

Background and policy process: Describe the problem you seek to address and its context in terms of research interest and relevance to forestry policy and/or practice (please be as specific as possible).

Current research & policy landscape: Provide a brief review of existing research in the subject area and address how the proposed review will contribute to research or policy needs.

Methods: A brief description of the types of studies you will be reviewing, sources of literature that will be searched, and the PICO (Populations, Interventions, Comparisons, Outcomes) and Context of your review [Refer to the CEE Guidelines for more information].

Results & Dissemination: Describe as specific as possible the target audience / intended users of the results, and how the research team will engage the target audience and policy process identified above.

Review Team: List of team members involved in the project, with brief notes of subject expertise. Please indicate the principal investigator(s). We also strongly advise the inclusion of an information specialist to support literature searching and retrieval during the initial stages of the review.

Timeline for Completion: Provide a work plan for map/review completion, noting anticipated completion dates for the research protocol and final map or review. Refer to the 'Resources' page on the EBF website for more details on the estimated time required for each stage of a systematic review. Please note that all maps/reviews must be completed by September 2017.

Proposed budget: Indicate the amount of funding sought from CIFOR's Evidence-Based Forestry initiative as well as the financial and/or in-kind contributions to be made by the research team. Please specify tentative amounts required for overheads, research support, workshops and conferences, and publication costs; note if the proposed map/review will be located within a larger research project.

Conducting a systematic review or map typically requires engaged human resources for 8 to 14 months. Additional financial resources may be required for staff time, meetings and contracts, and should be budgeted accordingly. CIFOR can provide technical support and training on systematic review methodology, but direct research support will not be available.

Expressions of Interest (EOIs) for systematic maps or reviews should be submitted to the EBF initiative at CIFOR-EBFInitiative@cgiar.org.

The deadline for applications is 15 February 2016. Chosen proposals will be notified in early March, and are expected to begin in April 2016. Projects must be completed by September 2017.
Please contact CIFOR-EBFInitiative@cgiar.org with any further questions.

A CGIAR Consortium Research Center

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Annex 1. Top 20 Questions in Forestry and Landscapes

1. Afforestation/Ecosystem restoration
- How can degraded ecosystems be restored to meet the objectives of biodiversity conservation, ecosystem function, ecosystem resilience, and sustainability of rural livelihoods?
- How can we develop models of forest restoration that are economically feasible?
- What are the implications for biodiversity and the environment of using afforestation as a mean of carbon mitigation?
- How can we best select species that simultaneously provide ecological and economic benefits?
- What are the best means to ensure that forest/landscape restoration projects add value to the landscape in terms of connectivity between populations and habitats, facilitating gene flow, species migration, as well as complementarity of land-uses and livelihoods of local people?

2. Local knowledge
- Can we develop practical tools that allow land-planning and forest management to be better tailored to the needs, culture and perceptions of different communities and locations?
- How can local knowledge, wisdom and experiences (e.g. on tree species, NTFPs [non-timber forest products]) be effectively combined with national and subnational forest assessment, monitoring and management efforts?

3. Landscape-scale approaches
- In the context of high human density and scarcity of farming land, how can we address the question of sustainable management of tropical forests?
- How can we improve agriculture to reduce the pressure in forested areas?
- How to merge studies on climate change so that aspects concerning adaptation, mitigation and risks are studied together?
- How can we maintain, restore and shape water-friendly landscapes, including forests and trees, while addressing partly conflicting land use and water needs of all stakeholders of a landscape?

4. Rights and benefits
- How do we make sure that the needs of indigenous people who rely on intact forest systems are being met while also providing wood products for economic growth?
- How can inclusive forest and landscape management be enhanced for the resource-poor?
- What are the institutional arrangements that might enable smallholders within a landscape to jointly market the ecosystems services provided by reforestation on their land?
- How can we ensure that local economies benefit from forests and are not grabbed for the benefit of external investors?

5. Environmental services
- How is it possible to develop a sustainable mechanism for payments for ecosystem services?
- Can we really use ecosystem service values as a method to value a whole landscape?
- How can farmers derive livelihoods from biodiversity conservation?

6. Greening business models
- How can we integrate environmental sustainability into trade regulation and law?
- How can we guarantee effective protection and conservation of environmental services in a world increasingly in need of raw materials at low cost?