Ten years ago, a group of forward-thinking men and women created the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) to promote a different type of forestry research—research that would find solutions to the challenges facing our forests and those who use or depend on them. The vision was for a “centre without walls”, creating new spaces for scientists from national institutions around the world to work with each other, and to build closer ties with the policy community and with local people. Forests and People: Research that makes a difference highlights some of CIFOR’s key achievements in its first decade of research.
Preface

Hundreds of millions of rural families rely on tropical forests for food, fuel, medicines, shelter and cash incomes. Forests help to feed their cattle, replenish their soils and protect their water supplies. Forest habitats house much of the world’s biodiversity, and the carbon they store serves to slow down global climate change.

But as we all know, tropical forests are rapidly disappearing, thus putting in danger all those who depend on them. We need to find ways to slow down this process and to ensure the poorest groups don’t lose access to forest resources. We also need to learn how to manage the new emerging landscapes—logged-over forests and plantations, secondary forests and forest fallows, agro-forests, crops and pasture—to supply as many as possible of the products and services that primary forests provided in the past.

Forests house great wealth, and that wealth is the source of many conflicts. Large companies and poor villagers, national and local governments, indigenous peoples and recent migrants all want a piece of the action. We urgently need to figure out how to manage these conflicts more peacefully and democratically, and without marginalising the poorer and weaker groups.

Finding solutions to these big challenges—and many smaller ones—requires research. Not just any kind of research, but research that matters. Research that puts relevant information in the hands of governments, international agencies, NGOs, communities and companies. Research that changes the way they think and act. Research that helps level the playing field between North and South. Research that reaches both the headlines and people’s daily lives.

Ten years ago, a group of forward thinking men and women created the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) to promote this sort of research. They had a vision of a ‘centre without walls’ that would create new spaces for scientists from national institutions around the world to work with each other, and to build closer ties with the policy community and with local people.

Over the past ten years CIFOR has achieved a great deal. We felt it was time to take stock of some of the achievements and to share them with our friends. This small book represents a modest attempt in that direction. We also felt it was an appropriate moment to express our gratitude to all of the many CIFOR staff, board members, partners and donors who have made these achievements possible.

A short book of this nature cannot possibly cover all of the many topics that CIFOR has worked on over the last ten years, nor everything we have accomplished. Instead, we have chosen to highlight those areas which best reflect the approach and the spirit of CIFOR’s unique research. Neither is it possible to single out all the people who deserve special thanks for their contributions to CIFOR. None the less, particular tribute is due to Jeffrey Sayer, who led CIFOR during its first eight years, and to Bo Bengtsson, Gill Shepherd and Jag Maini, who chaired the Board of Trustees. We would also like to express our very special gratitude to all of our donors, particularly those that have provided CIFOR with unrestricted funding. Without their trust and generous support there would be no story to tell. Still, this is just the beginning. We hope you will accompany us on the journey towards meeting the many challenges that lie ahead.

David Kaimowitz
Director General

Angela Cropper
Chair, Board of Trustees
Introduction
Forests matter, for a whole host of reasons. For people such as the caboclos of Amazonia, the Punan hunter-gatherers of Borneo and the pygmies of central Africa, tropical forests provide for nearly all their needs, from medicinal plants and protein-rich game to fuelwood and building materials; from resins and dyes to fruits and mushrooms. The forests are both a home and a food larder, and many forest dwellers supplement the wild foods they gather with staples such as cassava, rice and maize, grown on small slash-and-burn plots in the forest.

According to the World Bank, 240 million rural people live in or near tropical forests. Wild game and fish, much of it harvested in tropical forests, provide over 20 per cent of protein in 62 low-income countries. Some 2 billion people use biomass—mostly fuelwood and charcoal—as their main source of energy for cooking and heating their homes, and much of this comes from tropical forests.

Low-income farmers, living in forest clearings or around the forest fringe, earn a significant portion of their household income by collecting and selling non-timber forest products: fruits, nuts, rattan and the like. The processing of forest products into things like baskets, farm tools, furniture and ornaments provides significant employment and income in many places. Forests often act as a safety net during times of hardship as well, for example when droughts reduce crop yields or commodity prices fall. When cocoa prices plunged in the 1990s, many farming families in Cameroon turned to the forests, where they harvested vegetables like eru, a tree-climbing liana which they could sell in the local markets. This is a familiar story. Indeed, many of the world’s poorest people depend on forests, either wholly or in part, for their sustenance and livelihoods.

Then there is timber. In many tropical countries, the timber industry makes up a large part of the rural economy. It supplies a range of products, from sawn logs to charcoal, round logs to pulpwood. It generates significant revenues for the private sector, as well as taxes for governments, and it frequently constitutes an important source of foreign exchange. According to the International Labour Organisation, around 7.5 million people are
employed in formal wood-related industries around the world and many millions more can be found in informal wood-based activities.

Tropical forests are biologically the most diverse of all ecosystems. Although they cover less than 7 per cent of the Earth’s land surface, they are believed to contain over half of the world’s known species. These species often have more than an intrinsic value alone. For example, the trade in drugs that contain active ingredients extracted from forest plants and animals is now worth over US$ 100 billion a year. Tropical forests also provide important environmental services. They help to protect soils against the erosive action of wind and rain, and in some situations, play an important role in recycling and distributing freshwater and keeping it clean. They also help to lock up significant quantities of carbon dioxide, one of the principal gases contributing to global warming.

So forests matter, both for people and wildlife, yet they are being cleared at an alarming rate. During the 1990s, approximately 12 million hectares of tropical forest were lost each year. The causes of deforestation varied from one part of the world to another. In South America, the main cause of forest loss was agricultural expansion, especially by ranchers and corporate agribusinesses. In Africa, forest clearance by smallholders has been a significant factor, whereas in South-East Asian countries like Indonesia, logging by timber, pulp and paper, and palm-oil companies has been a major cause of forest loss. If present trends persist, the world will continue to lose an area of tropical forest equivalent to the size of Greece each year.

Fortunately, there are some bright rays of light to illuminate this gloomy picture, and the last decade represents a watershed in terms of the way we view forests, and the action that has been taken to solve the various environmental crises that we face at the beginning of the twenty first century. In 1992, the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro brought together a large gathering of politicians, scientists and environmental activists. Their task was to address in a coherent manner the problems of both environmental degradation and poverty. The summit spawned major international conventions on climate change and biological diversity. Over 100 world leaders signed up to ‘Agenda 21’ (a plan to achieve sustainable development in the twenty first century), and endorsed the ‘Forest Principles’, which recognised the need to manage and conserve forests in a manner that takes into account their multiple uses.

Since the first Earth Summit we have witnessed significant changes in the way in which governments perceive and manage their forests. A lack of resources, pressure from donors, farmers and indigenous people, and
the realisation that local people should be more involved in resource management, have encouraged many national governments to relinquish some of their decision-making powers to local governments, district councils and sometimes, to the communities themselves. At least 60 countries have now decentralised some aspects of natural resource management to local governments. At the same time, local communities have become progressively more involved in forest management and sometimes ownership as well.

Forest Trends estimates that local communities and indigenous people now own 14 per cent of all forest in developing countries and have more or less permanent usufruct rights over an additional 8 per cent. Coinciding with these changes, there has been a growing awareness among both policy-makers and the general public about the role which forests play in conserving biodiversity and sustaining the livelihoods of millions of people.

Our understanding of how forests work, why they matter and what is happening to them is based on research conducted by ecologists, anthropologists, sociologists and economists in a range of institutions around the world.

Environmental campaigners have played a key role in alerting the wider world to forest issues and problems. But they have not acted alone. Their campaigns have relied, in part at least, on the raw data provided by researchers.

One of the organisations which came into being around the time of the Rio Earth Summit was CIFOR. Its future activities would be shaped by two of the overriding concerns of the time: the need both to tackle poverty and to conserve the forest environment. The nature of forestry research began to change when CIFOR came into being. Prior to the 1990s, most research concentrated almost exclusively on breeding trees for ‘fast-
grow’ plantations, silvicultural practices and wood processing. “Traditional forestry research was extremely conservative,” suggests Jeff Sayer, the first Director General of CIFOR. “If you visited any forest research institute in the tropics, you’d find them doing roughly the same thing: managing forest plots, measuring yields and tree growth, testing different varieties. Before the 1990s, hardly anyone was looking strategically at forest problems, at the effects, say, of globalisation, agricultural subsidies or land tenure on forests and forest people.”

The traditional research continues in numerous institutions around the world today, and it is undoubtedly needed. However, in the early 1990s, it became increasingly apparent that a whole range of factors beyond just the biophysical has an impact on forests and those who depend on them. “When CIFOR was established in 1993,” reflects David Kaimowitz, who succeeded Jeff Sayer as Director General in 2001, “it was immediately clear that we would have no comparative advantage if we dedicated ourselves to the sort of biophysical research conducted by traditional forest research institutes.” The private sector and large national research agencies were already heavily involved in this sort of research, which requires far more money than would ever be made available to an institution like CIFOR. In any case, the positive contribution that this research made to poverty alleviation and sustainable forest management—CIFOR’s raison d’être—was often hard to discern.

Consequently, CIFOR decided to concentrate on forest policy research—research that influences policy—and on biophysical research that has clear implications for policy. It uses a multidisciplinary approach, with a strong emphasis on collaborating with developing-country scientists and institutions.

*Forests and People: Research that Makes a Difference* describes some of the research programmes, conducted by CIFOR and its collaborators, which have helped to provide a better understanding of forest issues, especially in the tropics. *Forests and People* explores research that has had a real impact on the way in which forests are used and managed, and on the thinking of the people who determine what happens to our forests. However, no attempt is made here to provide a comprehensive description of all of CIFOR’s research activities. Indeed, that would take many books, not 100-odd pages!

A brief historical account of why CIFOR came into being is followed by eight chapters dealing with different aspects of forest research. Two chapters—2 and 5—look at the impact of research on forest communities: at how the adaptive co-management programme is helping local communities manage their forests more efficiently and fairly; and how research into the use of non-timber forest products is feeding valuable information back to forest dwellers and market traders. Chapter 3 looks at the way that research is helping to shape policy at the international level, with a particular focus on how CIFOR has used its research findings to influence major players such as the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Chapter 4 explores research into Indonesia’s heavily indebted pulp
Introduction

and paper industry, and describes the way in which the research findings have been used by donor agencies, government departments, financial institutions and others concerned about the impact of the industry on the country’s forests and economy.

Chapter 6 looks at research into the development of Criteria and Indicators (C&I)—combining ethics, democracy and science in a unique way to help different stakeholders reach a consensus about what is, and what is not, best practice in forest management. This is followed by a chapter which investigates CIFOR’s research on commercial forestry issues, with a particular emphasis on the work it has been doing on reduced impact logging. The last two chapters describe research into decentralisation and forests, especially in Latin America, and CIFOR’s communication strategy.

Trading bamboo in Sichuan, China. The sale of various forest products provides important cash income for harvesters and traders the world over. (Photo by Manuel Ruiz-Pérez)
A centre without walls
It is tempting to think of CIFOR as a child of the 1992 Earth Summit. It came into existence the following year, and the summit’s explicit attempt to link environmental degradation with poverty, to see environmental and social concerns as being inextricably bound up with one another, has guided much of CIFOR’s research. However, the plans for CIFOR predated the first Earth Summit by some years.

As long ago as 1978, at a World Forestry Congress meeting in Jakarta, there was talk of creating an international forestry research centre, but it was not until the late 1980s that the idea began to crystallise. The prime mover was John Spears, who worked in the secretariat of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), based in the Washington DC offices of the World Bank. Spears believed that a new forest research centre could be accommodated within the Consultative Groups (CG) system, and he organised two meetings of experts to discuss the issue. The first was held in Bellagio, Italy; the second, known as Bellagio II, was held in the United Kingdom.

Created in 1971, the CGIAR is an association of public and private organisations which supports what are now known as Future Harvest centres. When Spears organised the Bellagio meetings, there were 13 centres, each devoted to increasing agricultural productivity and alleviating poverty in the developing world. In 1988, Bellagio II recommended that a new international centre dedicated to forestry research should be established under the umbrella of the CGIAR. “People were beginning to realise the importance of natural resource issues,” recalls Dennis Dykstra, who then worked for FAO, but later joined CIFOR. “Most of the CG research centres had concentrated on genetic work—improving the yields of crops such as rice and wheat. But it was becoming increasingly apparent that clearing land for crops was leading to serious forest loss and having an impact on communities, watersheds and biodiversity. What was needed was a centre devoted to researching these issues.” The CG donors were very much in favour of the idea, and Australia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States offered to sponsor a new forestry research centre. There was also a lot of goodwill from other European countries and Japan, and from many developing countries as well.
In 1991, the CGIAR appointed the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) as the implementing agency responsible for establishing the new centre. One of ACIAR’s first tasks was to set up a Board of Trustees. Its director, George Rothschild, had been a member of the ‘gang of four’, a small group of experts commissioned by CGIAR to produce a report on how a new forestry research centre might operate. Rothschild invited another member of the gang of four, Bo Bengtsson, to be the first Chairman of the centre’s Board of Trustees, a post he held until 1997. Bengtsson had recently moved from his job as Director of the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries, where he had had considerable experience dealing with CG centres, to the Swedish Centre of Agricultural Sciences at Uppsala University.

From the outset, it was clear that setting up a new research centre was going to be a fraught process. “Half the Board members were foresters,” explains Bengtsson, “and what they wanted was a technical research institute. The rest were social scientists, and they had a completely different vision.” Bengtsson himself felt there was no point in creating a traditional CGIAR centre devoted to technical research. “I thought it was very important for the new centre to work on policy issues—that was what was needed,” he says. The first few meetings of
the Board were very intense, at times volatile, but members eventually found common ground.

In the meantime, the ACIAR team solicited bids to host the new centre—CIFOR, as it was now known—from a number of South-East Asian countries. The offer made by the Indonesian government was considered the best, and in many ways this was an appropriate home for the new centre. Indonesia, then and now, harboured more tropical forest than any other country in the world apart from Brazil. There were still large areas of pristine forest, but a variety of pressures meant that the country had one of the highest deforestation rates in the world. The Ministry of Forestry was able to offer a generous financial package to build a new headquarters for CIFOR in Bogor, a short distance south of the capital, Jakarta.

Djamaludin Suryohadikusumo, the Forestry Minister from 1993 to 1998, was convinced that Indonesia would benefit from CIFOR’s presence. “As the host country, we expected CIFOR to set up research projects which would be beneficial to us,” he recalls. “In particular, we felt that CIFOR’s collaboration with our own research institute, the Forestry Research and Development Agency (FORDA), would improve our own research capabilities.” Ten years on, FORDA’s Director General, Hadi Pasaribu, believes that the relationship with CIFOR has yielded tangible
gains. “There have been clear benefits,” he says. “Some of CIFOR’s research—for example on decentralisation—has given us a better understanding of particular issues, and CIFOR training programmes have definitely helped our researchers in certain areas.”

While a permanent home was being sought for CIFOR, the Board of Trustees began interviewing for the post of Director General. Among those invited to apply was Jeff Sayer, a natural scientist with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Before the interview he was provided with a series of position papers on how the new centre might function, written by the ACIAR team. “I didn’t think much of them and I said so,” he recalls. “The papers outlined a very traditional research role for the new centre. I said that wasn’t what was needed.” Bengtsson and most of his colleagues agreed and Sayer was invited to become Director General. He arrived in Bogor in 1993 and FORDA provided CIFOR with office space while construction work began on the new headquarters.

CIFOR soon bore little resemblance to the organisation planned by some of those involved in its creation, as Ian Bevege, who led the ACIAR team, concedes. “Jeff was interested in forest research, not forestry research, as some of us had envisaged,” he says. The focus was to be on influencing policy, rather than traditional technical research. As the headquarters were being built, Sayer came under pressure to have on-site laboratories. The thinking within the CG system was that proper research required proper facilities, which meant laboratories. Sayer was not keen: CIFOR’s laboratory was to be the outside world as far as he was concerned. As it happened, some labs were built, but these were later taken over by the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF), which has one of its regional offices at CIFOR’s premises in Bogor.

One of the reasons why Indonesia won the bidding process was

CIFOR scientists have conducted a broad range of research activities in the 321,000 ha Malinau Research Forest, East Kalimantan. (Photo by Sven Wunder)
because the government offered to provide a large area of forest where researchers could work. In 1995, Sayer headed for East Kalimantan with his senior scientists and managers in search of a suitable site: the area they chose was to become, on the instructions of the Ministry of Forestry, the 321,000 hectare Malinau Research Forest (formerly known as the Bulungan Research Forest). They landed by helicopter in a remote camp belonging to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and headed into the forest.

"After about half a mile we were soaking wet and covered in leeches, and there was a rebellion," recalls Sayer. "Some of the scientists wanted to turn back to camp." The rebellion reflected the old adage that tropical forests are a paradise for ecologists, but a nightmare for foresters, who are more at ease with regimented plantations and the creature comforts of company guest-houses. Sayer drew an imaginary line in the sand, and insisted they all carry on deeper into the forest, with all its discomforts. The trip helped to establish the character of the new research centre and the sort of people who would work for it.

"CIFOR has a culture different from any other place I’ve worked," says Dennis Dykstra. "It’s very open, very collaborative. Team players get hired; loners—however good—don’t."

Today, CIFOR scientists have links with more than 300 researchers from around 50 international, regional and national organisations in 30 different countries.

CIFOR's research is largely conducted in partnership with developing country institutions and scientists in more than 30 countries around the world.
In 1996, CIFOR produced a formal statement of its strategic intentions for the next decade. It was clear the real challenge during the first three years had been to establish a research centre that practised a new approach to forest science. Senior staff and the Board then identified a clear set of priorities. The centre was to concentrate its activities on natural forests, degraded forest lands and non-industrial timber plantations. The main beneficiaries would be forest communities, the rural poor and small-scale forest-based enterprises. CIFOR's research would focus on tropical Asia, tropical Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. Its partners would include national institutes, universities, international forestry and agriculture research centres, NGOs, international development agencies and, on occasions, companies and individuals. CIFOR scientists now have links with more than 300 researchers from around 50 international, regional and national organisations in 30 different countries.

CIFOR's Board of Trustees has played a significant role in shaping its development. Its members have always acted in a guiding role and as a sounding board for the Director General and his staff. "Board meetings were often very heated in my day," recalls Sayer. "They were like high-quality seminars on strategic forest issues, with a diverse group of people bringing diverse views to the table and promoting serious debate." According to Sayer, Board meetings, and workshops attended by Board members, often had an influence that spread far beyond CIFOR. Furthermore, the Board has never seen itself as a rubber stamp, there simply to sanction the wishes of the Director General and his senior staff. Jagmohan Maini, former head of the secretariat to the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF), believes that the board has helped to change the direction of CIFOR's research from time to time. "When I joined the
Board in 1997,” he recalls, “I began to argue very strongly that we needed to look more at dry tropical forests, such as the Miombo woodlands in East Africa.” Much of CIFOR’s research in East Africa now focuses on these important dry woodlands.

Board members represent a broad range of disciplines and countries. For example, in one year the 15-person Board consisted of members from Canada, Denmark, Ghana, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Finland, the United Kingdom, Japan and France.

The cosmopolitan nature of the Board is increasingly reflected in the centre’s staff, and indeed one of CIFOR’s explicit goals has been to involve developing-country scientists in forest research, by employing them directly or working with them as collaborators. Today scientists employed directly by CIFOR come from some 30 different countries.

Many of the older CG centres occupy large facilities that are costly to maintain, and some employ large numbers of staff. CIFOR, in contrast, was never going to be like this. “When CIFOR was being set up,” recalls John Palmer, science advisor to CIFOR at the time, “many CG centres were 20 years old or more and in urgent need of modernisation and repair. There was a financial imperative to save money on new infrastructure.” There was a philosophical imperative too, as far as CIFOR was concerned: its aim was to become a ‘centre without walls’, with a strong focus on collaborating with researchers in other institutions, especially in the developing world. Economising on the hardware of research—buildings and infrastructure—meant that more could be spent on the software: on collaborative ventures and capacity building. Bo Bengtsson believes CIFOR has proved that it is possible for a relatively small institution to have a global influence, and he feels this is particularly important at a time when donors are looking to cut costs.

Some research programmes would never have been possible were it not for extensive collaboration. Take for example, CIFOR’s case comparison

Collaboration is the key

The elevation into positions of influence of developing-country researchers who have worked with CIFOR can be taken as one index of the success of the centre-without-walls approach. In Cameroon, key figures in WWF, Forest Watch and the Central African Regional Programme for the Environment (CARPE) all worked as researchers on a collaborative project investigating the underlying causes of deforestation, run by William Sunderlin, a policy scientist with CIFOR. A similar story can be told for several other tropical countries where CIFOR has been actively involved in collaborative research. For example, Alan Bojanic, who conducted his PhD research with CIFOR in Bolivia, became Vice-Minister of Agriculture and the principal advisor to the Minister. Cristian Vallejos, another CIFOR collaborator in Bolivia, now runs a Washington based NGO which promotes conservation in Bolivia and Peru. Pablo Pacheco, who has been doing his PhD with CIFOR in Brazil, is now considered to be a leading expert on the impact of decentralisation on municipal governments in Latin America.
project, which has analysed the harvesting and use of 61 non-timber forest products. This project has involved over 60 scientists from around the world—from Mexico to Zimbabwe, Colombia to Indonesia—providing them with a rare opportunity to meet, collaborate and expand their horizons. At the same time, CIFOR and the research project have benefited from their expertise: no single institute could have tackled such a wide-ranging project on its own.

Much the same could be said for CIFOR’s work on Criteria and Indicators (C&I) and adaptive co-management: these have been collaborative ventures involving large numbers of scientists from many different institutions and countries. Ruth Haug, Norway’s representative at CGIAR, believes that CIFOR’s collaborative partnerships with developing world scientists and institutions have helped to establish its identity. "One of the reasons we are so keen on CIFOR," she explains, "is because it really is a centre without walls—more so than any other CG centre."

A multidisciplinary approach has guided much of CIFOR’s research. The centre has sought to bring together people from disciplines that traditionally work in isolation: economists and sociologists; ecologists and policy scientists; foresters and anthropologists. Richard Donovan, the Chief Forester at the Rainforest Alliance, suggests this approach has contributed to the success of CIFOR’s work on Criteria and Indicators. "When the CIFOR scientists and their partners carried out their field tests," he says, "they fundamentally changed the way people looked at assessing forest sustainability by getting forest managers and policy-makers together in the same discussions."

Likewise, Neil Scotland of the European Commission’s Directorate-

'One of the reasons we are so keen on CIFOR is because it really is a centre without walls—more so than any other CG centre.' Ruth Haug, Norway’s CGIAR representative

Working with communities is a key element of CIFOR’s research. Here the women of Romwe, Zimbabwe, meet after a hard day’s work to discuss research in their community. (Photo by Carol J.P. Colfer)
General for Development suggests that CIFOR’s work on debt and the Indonesian pulp and paper industry brought together people and interest groups who would never normally associate with one another. “The research has broken down boundaries,” he says. “It has been a major achievement to get financial analysts, foresters, environmentalists, government officials and bankers together to discuss the same issue.”

CIFOR staff have always been encouraged to ‘think outside the box’, and according to Ruth Haug this has been one of the organisation’s strengths. “CIFOR scientists have very open minds when it comes to challenging the conventional wisdom,” she says. “They are continually challenging old ideas, old ‘truths’, and coming up with new ones—and then challenging them again. That’s very useful, and very exciting too.” Haug cites, in particular, the research on forest fires in Indonesia. “In the past people were always blaming slash-and-burn farmers for the fires,” she explains, “but CIFOR’s research showed us that it was the big companies which were really to blame, not the poor.” Haug also believes that CIFOR’s work on the underlying causes of deforestation has challenged the old belief that poor farmers are primarily responsible for forest degradation. In many parts of the world, the poor are not

The President of Indonesia, Megawati Soekarnoputri, takes part in CIFOR’s 10th Anniversary celebrations, at the Presidential Palace in Bogor (8 September 2003). The President prepares a tree cutting for planting, as the Minister for Forestry, Muhammad Prakosa (far right), looks on. (Photo: CIFOR collection)
to blame. "Research such as this", she adds, "has serious implications for policy-makers."

**Donor support—A research lifeline**

We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all of the donors who helped to make CIFOR a reality during its formative years and who have supported our continued operations and research programmes, in myriad ways, ever since. This generous support has allowed our work over the past 10 years—and the types of achievements outlined in this short book—to be a possibility. For this, we remain especially grateful.

Support has come in many forms, from generous unrestricted funding to project-specific restricted funding. It has also come from many different quarters—national governments, multilateral development agencies, private foundations and international organisations. Our donors are listed below.

**Collaborative partnerships**

Collaboration and partnerships have been a vital key in enabling CIFOR to conduct the type of research that it undertakes and in ensuring that the impacts of this research are of value

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**CIFOR donors (1993-2002)**

* Listed in descending order according to the total contribution made between 1993-2002

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and relevance at an international, regional, national and local level. Partnerships have been forged with both developing and developed country scientists from around the world, a whole range of government institutions, universities, development agencies, NGO’s, community-based organisations, and private companies. While it is not possible here to list all those who have contributed in this way, we would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution they have collectively made and continue to make, with their CIFOR colleagues, to the field of forestry research. Some of the key partners involved in the projects and programmes highlighted in the following sections, are listed at the end of each chapter.

**Further reading**


Working with local communities
Around the fringes of the Mafaungutsi State Forest, in Zimbabwe’s Midlands Province, some of the most vulnerable people—widows, women who have been deserted by their husbands, landless villagers—gain a significant income by collecting a grass that is used to make brooms. “Brooms are like a bank for us,” says widow, Mrs Mabhena. “They are our only source of income during hard times, when our crops have been sold and there is nothing in the gardens.”

If the trade is to be sustainable, the grass must be cut, rather than uprooted. This was something that the community established after experimenting with both forms of harvesting. However, people are very fussy about the sort of brooms they buy and when given the choice, they have traditionally favoured brooms made from uprooted grass, as these last longer. Until recently, those who were uprooting the grass, and destroying the resource, were returning home from the markets with their carts empty, while those who were thinking about the future of the resource were losing out in the marketplace, and were further punished by having to push their laden carts for long distances to get back home.

Stories such as this are unremarkable. But this one has a happy ending. Several years ago, many of the broom grass collectors realised they would lose their livelihoods if nothing was done. At a series of meetings, the collectors, mostly women, examined the levels of exploitation and devised various strategies to reduce destructive harvesting. These involved fining those who uprooted, rather than cut the grass, and confiscating their hoes. This dampened the spirits of those collectors who uprooted the grass, but did not entirely banish the practice. Reflecting on this, the collectors then explored new methods of bundling grass in order to make cut-grass brooms more appealing to buyers. By recycling old fertiliser bags to produce the ‘string’, they improved their bundling technique. Today, both collectors and broom grass are in much better shape.

In Zimbabwe, as in many other African countries, forest management strategies are in transition.
Historically, the state owned and managed most forest land, and used restrictive laws to control the exploitation of timber, game, grasses and other resources. It seldom allowed local communities to participate formally in forest management. However, this is now beginning to change. In the Mafaungutsi State Forest, for example, the Forestry Commission is encouraging communities to become more involved in resource management. However, this is not an easy process.

"When we first came here," recalls sociologist Frank Matose, a member of the CIFOR research team that helped to set up the broom grass user groups, "local communities thought we’d come to solve their problems. That’s how they had always viewed outsiders. But now they know they must address their problems themselves, and they are much less passive than when we first arrived." The local people are solving their problems using an approach termed adaptive collaborative management (ACM). Put simply, this involves three broad processes: collaboration, learning together and collective action.

Traditional forestry management tends to be very inflexible and autocratic. Government forest managers devise management plans and lay down rules, which the people living in or around the forests, or exploiting them in any way, are obliged to follow. Break the rules, and you are breaking the law. Under such a system, local people are rarely consulted. Adaptive management, in contrast, takes a very different approach. It assumes the management of any resource—broom grass, fish stocks, forests—must continually adapt to the changing needs of people, and to pressures which may change over time as well.

With adaptive management, there is a strong emphasis on identifying areas of uncertainty, learning as part of the management process, resolving conflicts and planning for the future together. Collaboration is required because different stakeholders have different interests, needs and knowledge about how best to manage the resource. Furthermore, institutions outside the community—national and local governments, commercial enterprises, NGOs—may also have a legitimate interest in the same resource.

There is a growing realisation in many countries that central governments, acting alone, are no longer capable of managing their forests effectively for the benefit of all. This realisation has been one of the factors that has encouraged governments to enter into partnerships with local communities and forest users, and over the past two decades various forms of collaborative management have come into being. In Nepal, for example, the government has handed management responsibilities for 850,000 hectares of forest to some 12,000 forest user groups since 1980. In effect, this means that 1.2 million rural households are now involved in managing their forests. Or at least, they are in principle.

Community-based forest management in Nepal has led to
improvements in the conservation of forests, in terms of increasing both the area and the density of forest cover. It has also helped to improve the management of soil and water, a key issue in a mountainous, erosion-prone country. “But there has been a negative side too,” says Don Gilmour, a former Director of the Nepal Australia Forestry Project and a member of the international steering committee which has acted as an independent critic-cum-think-tank to CIFOR’s ACM programme.

“The benefits as far as improving livelihoods are concerned are not so obvious, and it seems that poor groups such as low-caste families may now have less access to forest products than in the past.” During the early years, the forest user groups worked well, but as their number increased and the programme expanded across the country, issues such as equity tended to be ignored. “The key question is: how do you implement big programmes in a way that recognises the need for social learning, for adaptiveness?” asks Gilmour. He believes that an ACM approach might do just that by focusing attention on equity, power relations and the need to involve all sectors of society in the decision-making process.

Nepal is one of 11 countries where CIFOR’s ACM research programme has helped communities to reflect on their forestry problems, plan their actions, monitor the outcomes and improve their relationships with government agencies and others with a stake in the forests. “We wanted to get away from scientists and experts dictating to people what they should do,” explains programme leader, Ravi Prabhu. “We wanted to find mechanisms which would stimulate forest users to work out a sustainable future for both themselves and their forests.”

The story in Nepal: Research into empowering the disadvantaged

When CIFOR’s Nepal ACM team began its research in the Middle Hills it was immediately apparent that most forest user groups had an autocratic management structure dominated by an élite, most of whom were high-caste men. Women, the poor and the lower castes were seldom consulted on forestry issues, and as a result they were losing out. With the help of

With adaptive management, there is a strong emphasis on identifying areas of uncertainty, on learning as part of the management process, on resolving conflicts and planning for the future together

Narayan Sitaula, an ACM facilitator who works for New Era, discusses forest management with high-caste women from a forest user group in the Middle Hills of Nepal. (Photo by Carol J.P. Colfer)
the district forestry officers and representatives of the National Federation of Forest User Groups of Nepal, Cynthia McDougall and her team introduced the concept of ACM to the hills. "We were careful which communities we chose to work with," she says. "So that we could later develop some general lessons, we avoided choosing either the shooting stars or the very conflict-ridden." Instead, they chose four user groups that were 'average' or 'somewhere below average' in terms of their institutional maturity, their development progress and their ability to resolve conflicts.

In March 2001, the user groups began their ACM work with a series of 2-3 day workshops. All castes and both sexes were represented, as well as NGOs and the district forestry offices. Although most user groups had been together five years or more, they had never developed a shared vision. For the most part, development plans had been prepared by outsiders, at times with the participation of the community élites.

Besides encouraging those who had traditionally been excluded from participating in community forums to air their views, the researchers prompted the communities to develop a shared vision of how the forests could contribute to their lives. There were few clashes. Most people wanted to keep the forests. They recognised the importance of forests in terms of supplying clean water, and they all agreed that the forests should yield an income and provide a sustainable supply of timber, firewood, medicinal herbs and other products. "The visioning process helped to build a sense of common purpose," recalls McDougall.

The next step involved small groups choosing the indicators they would use to monitor progress towards their shared goals. Different ethnic groups and castes discussed their perceptions and priorities in detail. The user group members then conducted a self-assessment of their current situation, scoring the usefulness of the proposed indicators on a pictorial scale from 'new moon' to 'full moon', thus ensuring that the illiterate and innumerate were not excluded. They then developed a series of action plans. These included setting

### Award winning achievements

The efforts of local communities acting together to realise common goals, has led to two of the four user groups involved in ACM research in Nepal receiving awards for their achievements in community forest management. The forest office in the Kaski district judged the Bamdibhir user group to be the best of 399 groups in that district. The Andheribhajana user group in the Sankhuwasabha district won second prize out of over 200 local user groups. The awards were based on a comprehensive set of criteria, including the quality of operational plans, levels of participation, transparency of decision-making processes, promotion of income-generating activities for marginal groups, and success in conflict management.
up income-generating activities, increasing the participation of women and resolving boundary disputes. Social learning—coming up with a shared vision and devising a monitoring system—led to the formulation of the action plans. These were discussed and revised in the forest user groups and in meetings of hamlet representatives, before being finalised in each user groups’ general assembly.

Many of the goals chosen by the communities will take years to realise, so it is too early to make a definitive judgment on the true value of the ACM approach in Nepal. However, initial reactions have been very positive. The ACM process may be time consuming, both for researchers and communities, but local researcher, Raj Kumar Pandey believes the effort has been more than justified. "Without ACM," he suggests, "community forestry becomes like a half-cooked dahl bhaat that gives you stomach ache."

Don Gilmour puts it like this: "I believe that the ACM process has provided the quality add-ons that were needed in order to sustain community-based forest management. It has encouraged greater attention to issues such as equity and the building of social capital." ACM has certainly changed the ways in which user groups make decisions. They are far more democratic and inclusive than they were in the past, with the lower castes and the poor now being better represented. On a practical level, there has also been a significant increase in income-generating activities and forest management activities such as tree planting.

Two stories from the Bamdibhir Forest User Group shed light on how ACM has benefited the communities. The user group decided to set up an income-generating group to make and sell bamboo handicrafts. The explicit aim was to help women and the poor by selecting five members to participate in the new enterprise. However, one very poor, low-caste woman was left out and she objected strongly. Using information from an equity tracking mechanism devised by the group as part of the ACM monitoring process, she managed to show that middle-income women had been favoured ahead of the poor. She was subsequently given the opportunity to join the enterprise.

A second example concerns afforestation. When villagers in the hills receive outside assistance to plant trees, they are generally paid a daily wage. When members of Bamdibhir Forest User Group decided to plant trees to prevent avalanches on their terraces, they sought financial help from a bilateral aid programme. On this occasion, they took just half of their wages for themselves, and pooled the other half to finance small-scale loans for the poorer members of the community.

Focus on the future

ACM works by strengthening the processes of communication, collaboration and collective action in places where people seek to improve the management of their natural resources. There is no simple manual saying: do this or do that. Rather, the programme has produced a variety of materials, in various languages and aimed at different audiences. Books, academic and non-academic papers and computer tools have provided guidance on how to encourage social learning and local, regional and national workshops have also played a significant role in promoting ACM.

Most people, when they think of adaptive management processes, think of monitoring, which involves looking back. However, one important tool that ACM researchers use involves a collective gaze into the future. The use of 'future scenarios', or 'vision scenarios', has helped indigenous communities in Bolivia to plan the ways in which they might use the income they gain from their forests. In 1996, the government of Bolivia passed two
laws—an agrarian reform law and a new forestry law—which devolved territorial rights to indigenous people and provided them with the opportunity to make commercial use of forest products.

As Peter Cronkleton, an anthropologist working for CIFOR, points out, this was a revolutionary break with past policy: previously, the state permitted the sale of forest products only by industries that held forest concessions. "This was a great opportunity," explains Cronkleton. "Unlike Nepal, where large numbers of people are learning to manage relatively small areas, here you might have 20 or 30 indigenous families with the right to manage and commercialise 30,000 hectares of forest." But there is a catch: to gain the right to make commercial use of forest products, communities must produce management plans which have to be approved by the government’s Forest Superintendence. This is generally far beyond the capabilities of most communities.

The introduction of community forestry in Bolivia required a shift from household-based swidden agriculture to cooperative management of the forests for commercial gain. This represented an enormous change and the initial focus of the ACM work was on relatively basic matters: how to set up the administration for community forestry; how to negotiate with, say, chain-saw operators and machinery owners; how to deal with any cash generated through the sale of forest products in a transparent manner.

The sudden introduction of considerable sums of money is likely to lead to conflict, unless the whole community has agreed in advance how it should be used and distributed. Cronkleton and a team from the Bolivian Sustainable Forestry Project (BOLFOR) used 'vision scenarios' to help the Guaraya villagers of Salvatierra, in eastern Bolivia, develop a collective vision of how they wanted the village to develop. When using vision scenarios, facilitators like Cronkleton ask individuals to imagine an ideal future and explore its implications. Once they have established a vision, there is a group discussion.

The vision scenario workshop in Salvatierra was held over a two-day period in August 2002. In their ideal future, the villagers saw new health posts, a potable water system and an expanded school. The women tended to focus on domestic items such as glass windows and wooden doors for their homes, and they wanted funds to be set aside for a weaving group. These vision scenarios helped the community to establish how they might use the income from the sale of forest products, and they helped them to identify differences of opinion before they developed into open conflicts. Of course, this was just a first step in the process. Later they would need to prioritise their investments, and many more meetings would be held before they established exactly how they would manage the community forests.

Vision scenarios are just one of many tools devised to help communities manage their forests more effectively and fairly.

One criticism frequently levelled at the ACM teams is that they are acting more like development agencies than researchers. In some
places, especially in Africa, this has been inevitable. For example, in Zimbabwe, CIFOR could not have initiated the ACM process without first helping to establish the user groups for broom grass, beekeeping and thatch grass, none of which existed before. Cronkleton says that the ACM work in Bolivia has been criticised for the same reasons. But Cronkleton, like his colleagues in other parts of the world, has a research agenda too: part of the ACM work involves an evaluation of how different participatory approaches work, and an analysis of the factors that encourage successful community-based resource management. This research is helping CIFOR and its collaborators to formulate tools which will enable others to establish ACM-type processes elsewhere.

The above stories are about particular communities and situations, but the research programme seeks to have an influence which extends far beyond the research sites. It is generating lessons about the conditions under which ACM processes are needed and are viable, and about what has to be done if governments and NGOs are to apply ACM principles on a large scale. The programme has also sought to foster conditions which enable people working in each of the participating countries to share and implement the research findings. It has achieved this by setting up national steering committees, which provide guidance and ensure that decision-makers and opinion leaders are kept abreast of the research results. The programme has forged strong relationships with community forestry practitioners as well, at district and national levels, both within government and outside it. The research teams have also developed close links with universities in the hope that the next generation of forest policy-makers will be sympathetic to the ACM approach.

ACM has helped to improve forest management institutions at the local level, increase trust and respect within and between different user groups, encourage collective action to solve forest problems and bring marginal communities into the decision-making loop. As a result, the ACM research has already begun to influence government policy in several countries. In Nepal, for example, the research team contributed to the shaping of the new National Forestry Guidelines. According to Keshav Kanel and Bharat Pokharel, senior officials at the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, “ACM research ... can be a critical eye, a source of innovation and reflection, and can enhance the quality of overall community forestry in Nepal.”

In the Philippines, Celso Diaz, head of research at the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), believes that ACM could help to improve community-based forest management. “We believe that it has great potential value,” he says. ACM has helped to reduce conflicts between neighbouring communities at one research site, in Palawan, and has helped local people to negotiate a better deal with DENR when it comes to paying a tax on timber. In Zimbabwe, the Forestry Commission believes the research will improve its joint management initiatives with local people in the Mafaungutsi State Forest and elsewhere. “We will undoubtedly benefit from CIFOR’s ACM programme,” suggests Deputy General Manager, Sibongile Baker. “They have developed methodologies we can use, and there is no point in us trying to reinvent the wheel.”

Stripped down to its basics, ACM is about establishing institutional arrangements and processes that
The Miombo woodlands

Few people outside Africa have heard of the Miombo woodlands, but spend a little time there and you soon realise just how important they are. Spread across seven countries, from Tanzania south to Zimbabwe, and from Angola east to Mozambique, the woodlands cover 2.7 million square kilometres, an area five times the size of France. For their livelihoods and sustenance, at least 100 million people depend on these woodlands, which also provide a key habitat for some of the continent’s most celebrated animals and birds. Unfortunately, they are disappearing at an alarming rate.

“We now have a much better understanding about the way people interact with the woodlands than we did in the past, and about how to enhance the interaction in ways which bring benefits to both people and the environment,” says Godwin Kowero, Regional Coordinator of CIFOR’s Eastern and Southern African office. This understanding is based, in part, on the research conducted by CIFOR and its partners.

The Miombo in Transition: Woodlands and Welfare in Africa, edited by Bruce Campbell and published in 1996, was the first comprehensive attempt to look at the ecology of the woodlands, the role they play in people’s lives and the institutional arrangements governing their use and management. Subsequently, some 30 scientists from Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe have examined key issues that influence the use and management of the Miombo woodlands. Part of this research, led by CIFOR and funded by the European Union and the UK Department for International Development (DFID), evaluated the role that local communities, the private sector and others could play in the management of the woodlands.

The results suggest there are few examples of successful community-initiated forest management, and that from a purely financial point of view community-based forest management might not be the best option. It seems joint management between government and local communities often makes better sense, both financially and ecologically. The researchers have developed tools like ‘Co-View’—a ‘workbench’ for transforming visions into action plans with the help of a computer—to guide negotiations among stakeholders, specifically at the local community level.

Much of the information assembled and generated by the research is contained in Policies and Governance Structures in Woodlands of Southern Africa, published in 2003. Research findings have also appeared in the Zimbabwe Science News, which circulates widely in schools, universities, government offices and other institutions, and there has been a steady stream of publications, especially by the university researchers involved in the project. The primary focus of CIFOR’s work has been on building new approaches and tools for sustainable woodland management. This has necessitated putting considerable effort into the capacity building of CIFOR’s research partners in this region.

The research findings have been used in a variety of ways. They featured in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Tanzania, and helped to inform the Forestry Sector Outlook Study, an FAO-guided process. The researchers have also helped to develop Criteria and Indicators for sustainable forest management for the governments of Namibia and South Africa. In Zimbabwe, an Inter-Institutional Forum on Policy Relevant to Forestry was established and is coordinated by the Institute of Environmental Studies at the University of Zimbabwe, the Forestry Commission and CIFOR’s Regional Office in Harare. This forum provides a good opportunity not only to present CIFOR work, but also to interact with, and learn from, other key players in the forestry sector. ACM has helped to improve forest management institutions at the local level, increase trust and respect within and between different user groups, encourage collective action to solve forest problems and bring marginal communities into the decision-making loop.
Chapter 2: Working with local communities

encourage local democracy and collaboration, and provide the time and space for group reflection. At many research sites, villagers participating in the ACM process have said that ACM has increased their sense of ownership over forest resources and has given them the confidence to participate in processes that will affect their lives, and their environment, for the better. “ACM helps to wean people off a dependency culture,” says Ravi Prabhu. “What it says is this: You don’t have to wait for the world to come to you. You can go out to it.” This is precisely what has happened with the resource user groups in Zimbabwe. In the early days, all those who attended were given a small per diem for giving up their time. Now almost all refuse the money, even though some have to walk 10 kilometres or more to reach the meetings. “What they’re telling us”, says Frank Matose, “is that the process is very valuable to them. Now they are no longer looking for outside help, and they are coming up with their own plans to manage their resources.”

Further reading


Key partners

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Philippines

Gita Buana Foundation, Jambi, Yayasan Padi, Balikpapan, Yayasan Biofer Manusia (BIOMA), Samarinda, Kalimantan Timur, Indonesia

Forestry Commission, Zimbabwe

National Forestry Development Agency (ONADEF), Cameroon

Forestry Service Division, Ghana

Forestry Research Institute (FRIM), Malawi

The Bolivian Sustainable Forestry Project (BOLFOR, Proyecto de Manejo Forestal Sostenible, USAID-funded project), Bolivia

KYRGYZ-SWISS Forestry Support Programme (KIRFOR, SDC-funded project), Kyrgyzstan

University of Antananarivo/Fianarantsoa, Madagascar

Grupo de Pesquisa em Sistemas Agro-Florestal do Acre (PESACRE) and University of Florida, Acre, Brazil

The Brazilian Company of Farming Research (EMBRAPA), Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi, Federation of the organizations of social and educational assistance (FASE-Gurupa), Para, Brazil
A small research institute like CIFOR cannot hope to influence the way the world’s forests are used by working in isolation. Rather, it must work with the major organisations and policy-making processes that help to define the global forestry agenda. This chapter looks at how CIFOR has sought to do this during its first ten years.

One of the most important actors as far as tropical forests are concerned is the World Bank. Although forest-related lending as a share of its total lending has remained below 2 per cent, the World Bank’s forest-related loans increased by almost 80 per cent during the 1990s. Its loans for forestry projects and the forest components of other projects amounted to US$ 1.97 billion between 1984 and 1991. This figure rose to US$ 3.51 billion for the period from 1992 to 1999.

No other organisation can match such lending power, and nor do any of the other multilateral or bilateral agencies spend anywhere near as much as the World Bank when it comes to research and sectoral analysis. This is one reason why many of these agencies often take their cue from the Bank, which they regard as a credible judge of how best to target loans and grants to the forestry sector. A survey of influential forest policy documents, conducted by CIFOR and described in greater detail in Chapter 9, found that the World Bank produced a very high percentage of these key documents.

In 2000, the World Bank’s independent Operations Evaluation Department (OED) published a candid review of the Bank’s 1991 Forest Policy, which had guided its lending strategy throughout the 1990s. The review found the World Bank had done nothing to slow the rate of deforestation, even though the 1991 Forest Policy had, as the review put it, ‘reoriented Bank forest operations towards environmental sustainability’. Destructive and illegal logging had continued to increase in many developing countries, and the review recommended that the Bank should modify its lending strategy.

The review’s recommendations were partly based on the findings of six
Chapter 3: Influencing the global agenda

One of our concerns was that the 1991 Forest Policy had been formed without consulting developing countries," explains Uma Lele, who led the review team. Among other things, the case studies helped to establish what NGOs, the private sector and governments thought about the 1991 Forest Policy. In India and Costa Rica, the OED team was able to hire local consultants to conduct the case studies. "But in the other countries we couldn’t find the local scholars, so we looked to CIFOR for help," says Lele. CIFOR already had offices in Brazil, Cameroon and Indonesia and was therefore well placed to provide substantial inputs to these case studies. "CIFOR played a very important role in developing the three case studies it was closely involved with," recalls Lele, "and CIFOR researchers also acted as peer reviewers for the other studies."

While Lele’s team worked on the review, the Bank commissioned a series of background papers and analytical studies that would also contribute to the formulation of its new Forest Policy. "The World Bank and Non-forest Sector Policies that Affect Forests’—the only paper dealing with this key topic—was written by two CIFOR scientists, David Kaimowitz and Arild Angelsen. ‘Despite the constant obsession with the Bank’s policy on logging in primary humid tropical forests,’ wrote the authors, ‘the Bank’s greatest impacts have resulted from structural adjustment, transportation, hydro-electric, mining and transmigration loans, rather than forestry projects.’ In other words, non-forest policies and projects have had a much greater impact on forests than forest policies themselves.

"CIFOR played a key role in highlighting the significance of extra-sectoral policies," confirms Odin Knudsen, who oversaw the drafting of the 2002 Forest Policy. "We now accept that forest policy is just the tip of the tail of the dog when it comes to influencing what happens with forests. Other issues are far more important," he says. CIFOR’s work on the significance of extra-sectoral lending policies provided strong support for the belief that there should be ex-ante and ex-post social and environmental impact assessments of the Bank’s structural adjustment programmes. This is still under consideration within the Bank.

The World Bank’s 1991 Forest Policy was explicitly conservationist in outlook—and yet it failed to stem the tide of deforestation. The Bank’s latest Forest Policy maintains a strict ban on financing logging operations within protected areas, but the Bank has re-engaged in the commercial
exploitation of forests outside protected areas. The new policy is based on the belief that the sustainable use of forests can help to reduce poverty, and that it is possible at the same time to protect biodiversity and the global environmental services that forests can provide. The new policy recognises that the future of the world’s forests will be largely determined by how well, or how badly, forests are managed outside protected areas.

CIFOR has also worked closely with the United Nations Environment Program’s Global Environment Facility (GEF). GEF was established as a financial mechanism for the three conventions—on biodiversity, desertification and climate change—which were spawned by the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. Between 1992 and 2000, GEF provided US$ 1.2 billion for 395 biodiversity-related projects in 123 countries. Over US$ 500 million went on forest projects, but three-quarters of this was devoted to protected areas, which cover less than 10 per cent of the developing world.

In the late 1990s, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) asked CIFOR to prepare a paper on how it could engage more fully in the conservation of forest biodiversity. Up until then, CBD had paid relatively little attention to forest biodiversity. One of the paper’s recommendations was that it should establish an ad hoc technical expert group on forest biological diversity. This was duly done, and the expert group has helped CBD to develop its expanded programme of work on forest biodiversity, with substantial inputs from CIFOR. The 180-plus parties to the convention adopted the programme of work for forest biological diversity in April 2002.

The Secretariat of CBD also commissioned a number of technical papers from CIFOR scientists. One of these was on forest fires, another was on non-timber forest products (NTFPs). "These have been extremely useful," says Jo Mulongoy of the Secretariat. "In the past, when people talked about NTFPs in west Africa they were thinking mostly of bush meat. But CIFOR’s research has shown that a whole range of other products needs to be included. We now have a much better idea of what NTFPs are." According to Mulongoy, Nasi’s keynote address on NTFPs to CBD’s Subsidiary Body on Science, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) helped to establish the importance of NTFPs on the CBD agenda.

With over 4000 staff scattered around the globe, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is one of the largest specialist agencies within the United Nations system and the lead agency not just for agriculture, but for forestry, fisheries and rural development as well. Since its inception, CIFOR has worked closely with FAO on a whole range of forestry issues. "One of the great things about CIFOR is that it has a global mandate, unlike many research institutions based in universities," says Hosny el-Lakany, head of FAO’s Forestry Division. "It is also part of the CG system, which means that it is more connected with other disciplines such as agriculture than many other forestry research institutes."

El-Lakany believes that CIFOR’s research has helped FAO to

'In the past, when people talked about NTFPs in west Africa they were thinking mostly of bush meat. But CIFOR’s research has shown that a whole range of other products needs to be included. We now have a much better idea of what NTFPs are.'

Jo Mulongoy, CBD
understand the role that forests can play in alleviating poverty. "We have to respond to signals from donors and developing countries," he explains, "and we were getting the message that this was an area we needed to look at. But we lacked information." FAO commissioned a series of studies by CIFOR. William Sunderlin, Sven Wunder and Arild Angelsen wrote the chapter on forests and poverty alleviation for FAO’s *State of the World’s Forests 2003*, and CIFOR researchers have provided various other inputs. "CIFOR’s research helped us to determine where we should channel our energies and resources," says el-Lakany. "It has already had an influence by focusing our attention on non-wood forest products and the importance of small forest enterprises."

During the past decade, FAO has been particularly concerned about the decline in the standards of forestry research in many developing countries. "Look at what’s happened in Africa," suggests Oudara Souvannavong, a Senior Forestry Research Officer at FAO. "The situation has been gradually getting worse. Forestry is seldom seen as a priority, and in many countries forest research institutes have been integrated into agricultural institutes, and forestry research teams have been split up."

As a result, these countries have lost their capacity to carry out meaningful forestry research, a fact which was confirmed by several reviews conducted by Godwin Kowero, CIFOR’s Regional Coordinator in Eastern and Southern Africa, and Michael Spilsbury, an impact assessment specialist at CIFOR.

FAO has recently been involved in setting up regional research networks in Africa. These seek to improve the research capacity of national institutions, and help them to define their research agendas and prepare research projects. "CIFOR has been very useful to these networks, providing both advice and scientific leadership," explains Souvannavong. "We have found that CIFOR’s involvement in collaborative research projects gives scientific credibility to national research centres, which generally lack credibility with most donors." Souvannavong adds that these collaborative ventures have been good for CIFOR too. "There is always a risk that research institutions will retreat into an ivory tower," he says. "Networks like this help CIFOR to stay in touch with what’s happening on the ground."

Much of CIFOR’s research on reduced impact logging, described in greater detail in Chapter 7, was conducted in the Malinau Research Forest in East Kalimantan. In this instance, the key financial supporter has been the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO), which was set up in Africa to improve the research capacity of national institutions. (Photo by Christian Cossalter)
up in 1983 to provide a consultative framework among countries that produce and consume tropical timber. Besides looking at reduced impact logging, researchers from CIFOR and the Indonesian government’s Forestry Research and Development Agency (FORDA) have studied forest dwellers’ dependence on forest products and local perceptions of biodiversity (see Chapter 5). Researchers have also investigated the impact of decentralisation on Indonesia’s forests (see Chapter 8). “We’re very glad CIFOR has taken up this difficult challenge,” says Eva Mueller of ITTO. “The research on decentralisation will be very useful for us, both in the context of Indonesia and elsewhere.” CIFOR has also undertaken a number of other projects with ITTO. For example, forest scientist Cesar Sabogal was the co-author, with Jurgen Blaser of the Swiss development agency, Intercopera- tion, of Guidelines for the Restoration, Management and Re-

habilitation of Degraded and Secondary Tropical Forests. The guidelines provide a conceptual framework for understanding forest degradation and restoration and a checklist of objectives and recommendations. Having drafted the guidelines, Sabogal participated on the panel of experts set up to discuss them. He organised two Latin American workshops as part of the ITTO process. The guidelines and the workshops were explicitly designed to have a practical impact on the funding of forestry projects by ITTO and other agencies.

Jagmohan Maini, a former head of the Secretariat to the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and former Chairman of CIFOR’s Board of Trustees, points out that there is no single institution or convention that is capable of dealing with the great range of issues related to tropical forests. This is one of the reasons why the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) was established in April 2001, to support the work of UNFF in promoting sustainable forest management. CPF is an inter-agency partnership modelled on the informal, high-level Inter-agency Task Force on Forests that supported the UNFF’s forerunners, the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). Thirteen international organisations now make up the membership of the CPF.
CPF has set up a focal agency system, the purpose of which is to improve coordination and cooperation among members. CIFOR has been the focal agency for two distinct topics: the social aspects of forestry; and forest research, for which it now shares the lead agency role with the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) and the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF). As far as the latter topic is concerned, CIFOR first helped to draw attention to the importance of forest-related research at IPF/IFF meetings, and continues to do so today within UNFF. CIFOR was chosen as the lead agency on social issues in recognition of its research on the links between forests and poverty. Pekka Patosaari, Maini’s successor at UNFF, highlights this as one of the organisation’s strengths. “CIFOR has been much more helpful than many people realise,” he reflects. “It has had an important, almost invisible influence.”

CIFOR has also contributed to reports produced for UNFF by other CPF focal agencies. For example, CIFOR prepared an overview on the main causes of deforestation on behalf of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). “This was one of the best papers that UNFF received,” says Bai-Mass Taal, who commissioned the overview. “Its recommendations were accepted by all governments and adopted in 2000.”

When it comes to assessing the subject of climate change, and the role that tropical forests might play in mopping up carbon, a great many different agencies and research institutes have been involved in the debate, and it is difficult to attribute any shift in thinking among policy-makers to one particular organisation. All the same, CIFOR’s research has undoubtedly helped to keep policy-makers abreast of the latest thinking on this complex and difficult topic.

One of the most contentious aspects of the Kyoto Protocol, which aims to reduce the amount of carbon pollution entering the atmosphere, is the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). Many environmental organisations and some countries have argued against the inclusion of forestry projects in the CDM. In their view, this would let developed countries off the hook by allowing them to finance forestry projects in developing countries, instead of reducing fossil fuel emissions at home. Furthermore, critics of the CDM believe it could encourage the establishment of large-scale plantations, which could have a damaging impact both on the environment and local communities. At a time when some authors were talking about a
Influencing the Influencers

Following the findings of its 1997 survey on ‘who influences conventional wisdom about forests’, CIFOR has ensured that key institutional opinion-shapers are kept up to date with the organisation’s research findings and communications (see Chapter 9). The extent to which CIFOR’s research is formally acknowledged or cited in the ‘significant policy documents’ of these opinion leaders is an important indicator of CIFOR’s relevance to these (and other) audiences, and indirectly, its influence on them as well. Citations in significant policy documents of the World Bank, World Resources Institute, International Tropical Timber Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Convention on Biological Diversity and Global Environment Facility are far more indicative of ‘influence’ than citation rates in the academic literature.

Between 1997 and 2003, the influential institutions listed below, published 12 major policy documents of significant relevance to CIFOR’s mission and priorities. Of these, CIFOR played an important role in the preparation of seven documents (2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10 and 11). Of the five technical papers related to forest biodiversity that CBD has produced, CIFOR scientists were authors or co-authors of four of them.

In FAO’s State of the World’s Forests reports—one of FAO’s main forestry documents, published every two years—the rate of CIFOR citation suggests a growing influence. It has increased, from an acknowledgement in 1997, to the 2003 report citing CIFOR’s research eight times and including an entire chapter on forests and poverty written by CIFOR staff. CIFOR’s research is also cited in a high proportion of ‘secondary policy documents’ (other relevant documents published by these key institutions, apart from those listed below, which relate to policies affecting forests).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A snapshot of significant forest related institutional policy documents, 1997-2003</th>
<th>Citations of CIFOR research</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. World Bank - OED Forestry Evaluation, 2000 (Also 6 country case studies)</td>
<td>8 (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. WRI - The Right Conditions, The World Bank Structural Adjustment and Forest Policy Reform, 2000 (Also, the Governance and Forests Programme)</td>
<td>8 (23)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. FAO - State of the World’s Forests, 2003 (Including one chapter by CIFOR)</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. FAO - State of the World’s Forests, 1999</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. FAO - State of the World’s Forests, 1997 (No Reference/Bibliography section; CIFOR’s Policy Dialogue Meeting acknowledged)</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. FAO - Forestry Outlook Study for Africa, 2001</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. GEF - The Challenge of Sustainability, 2002</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. CBD - Report of the Ad Hoc Technical Group of Forest Biodiversity (Also, the Technical Series related to forest biodiversity)</td>
<td>7 (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. ITTO - Guidelines for the Restoration, Management and Rehabilitation of Degraded and Secondary Tropical Forests (co-authored by CIFOR)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
vast CDM forestry market, a paper by Joyotee Smith, Kalemani (Jo) Mulongoy, Reidar Persson and Jeff Sayer, published in *Environmental Conservation* in 2001, argued that the size of the market would be much smaller than previously thought. This was widely cited and probably helped to take some of the heat out of the debate.

A meeting on carbon and livelihoods, held in Bellagio, Italy and organised by CIFOR and the University of Maryland, concluded that small-scale carbon-sequestering forestry projects could benefit local people, but would be more expensive to establish than large-scale industrial plantations. This was one of the factors that encouraged policy-makers at the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 7) to decide that special modalities would be introduced for small-scale projects, thus lowering their transaction costs.

Published to coincide with the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 8), held in New Delhi in 2002, *Forest Carbon and Local Livelihoods*, by Joyotee Smith of CIFOR and Sarah Scherr of Forest Trends, made a strong argument for using forest carbon payments to provide additional income to small farmers. The authors looked at the benefits and risks associated with large-scale forestry plantations, small wood lots, natural forests managed by local communities and other possible arrangements. They showed small-scale projects were likely to provide the greatest environmental benefits and also, do the most to help small farmers. This publication, a side event organised by CIFOR and an opinion piece in the *International Herald Tribune* by David Kaimowitz, meant that policy-makers involved with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) had a better understanding of how carbon storage schemes could assist the rural poor. The fact that many newspapers ran stories about Smith and Scherr’s paper helped too.

CIFOR’s research has helped keep policy-makers abreast of the latest thinking on climate change and the role forests and forestry projects can play in mopping up carbon pollution. One of the findings is that small-scale forestry projects are likely to provide the greatest environmental benefits and also, do the most to help small farmers. (Photo by J. Clarke)

In the relatively small world of policy-oriented forestry research, where the majority of people either know each other or know of each other, personal relations matter. “On a personal level, our dealings with CIFOR have been very pleasant,” suggests Eva Mueller of ITTO, “and that makes a difference.” Patrick Durst, head of FAO’s Bangkok office, agrees. “The success of a research programme often comes down to individual scientists and their attitude towards collaboration,” he says. “CIFOR is one of the organisations we consistently go to, and that’s partly because we are comfortable with the individual scientists we work with.” Durst has
other major donors, and it produces the sort of public goods that developing countries need." This does not preclude CIFOR scientists from conducting rigorous research and having their findings reported in peer-reviewed journals, but it does mean that their work must have practical implications as well—for policy-makers, international organisations, national governments and forest-dwelling communities. According to Odin Knudsen of the World Bank, this practical imperative has helped to shape CIFOR’s development. “Much of CIFOR’s research is closely connected to what is actually happening on the ground, and that’s what makes them useful to us,” he says.

Further reading


Key partners

United Nations Environment Program—Global Environment Facility (UNEP-GEF)
Global Environment Facility Secretariat
Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat
International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO)
Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)
Forest Trends
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)