

Forests under pressure – Local responses to global issues

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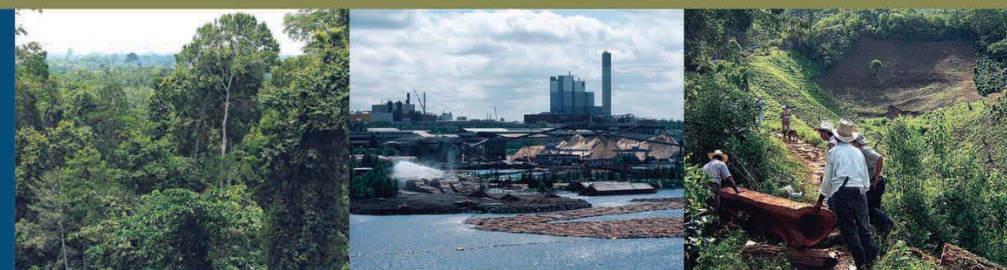


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Introduction to Part III and summary of the findings from the case studies

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I.1 Introduction to Part III

Part III provides a synthesis of the case studies included in this volume. Following this introductory section, section 1.2 presents a concise summary of the results and findings from the case study analyses, including reflections on important implications of these findings for future efforts seeking to further sustainable forest management (SFM). The summary section ends with final reflections on the way forward, suggesting measures that might be taken to improve the effectiveness of SFM. More detailed information on the prerequisite conditions across cases and the interactions among them can then be found in the chapters 2, 3, and 4.

Chapter 2 presents a more comprehensive synthesis of the cases, focusing first on the cases from the perspective of the primary outcomes sought by SFM: the contribution of forests (including plantations and trees outside forests) to livelihoods and to forest extent and condition. The authors of each case study were requested to provide an informed assessment of their cases from the perspective of these outcomes – specifically perceived trends – and a synthesis of this information is presented.

Chapter 3 focuses on an analysis across the cases for each prerequisite condition included in the analytical framework. These analyses provide invaluable insights into measures being taken in different contexts around the world to address processes and issues inherent to each of the prerequisite conditions. In addition to understanding the diversity of measures and approaches being pursued, the across-cases analyses shed light on the prerequisite conditions that have been the most challenging to address and that, as a consequence, pose frequent threats to SFM.

Chapter 4 analyses interactions among prerequisite conditions within the case studies, making it clear that measures taken related to each prerequisite condition do not act in isolation. Rather, outcomes depend on complex interactions among them. Attention is also focused on the influences of regional

and global processes on forest-related policies and behaviour in the case studies. This part of the analysis illustrates that forces and inputs influencing conditions for SFM originate from global to local scales.

Part III ends with a short section on methodological and analytical considerations, especially in relation to the availability and quality of information (chapter 5). Throughout this part the case study chapters to which we refer are indicated by the corresponding number of the case study chapter in Part II in square brackets.

I.2 Summary of findings

By definition, SFM seeks to balance the provision of society's growing demands for forest products and services while conserving forests, biodiversity, and other ecosystem services that forests and trees provide. In this volume, diverse case studies examine the implementation of SFM, utilising a common framework built on what have been identified as important prerequisite conditions for SFM, with corresponding guiding questions (see Part I, chapter 3, for the analytical framework). The case studies were not selected in an arbitrary fashion: preference was given to cases where considerable efforts have been made to achieve SFM over an extended period of time. The cases range from forest-based situations to mosaics of agriculture and forests, agroforestry, and secondary forests. The achievement of "success" was not a criterion for case study selection. Once the authors applied the framework, assessing measures taken to address issues intrinsic to each of the different conditions, they were asked to provide an informed assessment of perceived trends in forests' contributions to livelihoods (including enhanced income through commercial transactions) and to forest condition. A summary of the major findings of Part III is provided, ending with a brief discussion of challenges and limitations inherent to this type of exercise.

1.2.1 Prerequisite conditions across the case studies

Chapters 2 and 3 synthesise the efforts made across the case studies related to each prerequisite condition for SFM included in the analytical framework. This synthesis contributes to an understanding of conditions where significant progress has been made and others where meaningful progress is ongoing or has eluded efforts to date. A brief summary of the principal findings follows:

- ◆ More than half of the cases report changes in land tenure and/or use rights, generally favouring local actors, including in some cases the recognition of customary tenure and efforts to resolve conflicts associated with overlapping claims.
- ◆ Virtually all case studies indicate that forests and trees continue to make important contributions to local livelihoods. However, more than half report that the extent and condition of forest resources are either in clear decline due to deforestation and forest degradation or at risk, implying that these contributions may be jeopardised over time.
- ◆ Approximately half of the case studies report efforts to improve public administration related to SFM, while a number of cases refer to the counterproductive imposition of complex bureaucratic regulations, problems of transparency, and other unfavourable administrative practices that constrain local involvement in SFM.
- ◆ In more than half of the case studies, progress is reported in promoting stakeholder cooperation and participation. In others, however, local actors have not been empowered to take part in crucial decisions regarding forest management and use. In some cases, unequal power arrangements subject local producers to corruption and lack of transparency.
- ◆ The enforcement of laws and regulations continues to be a major challenge in nearly half of the case studies (e.g. control of illegal logging).
- ◆ The reconciliation of different land uses is one of the principal challenges facing SFM. In some cases, local actors seek to convert forests to other, more economically attractive land uses. In others, governments have invited foreign investment in agricultural and extractive ventures, directly impacting forest areas where efforts are underway to further SFM. The lack of reconciliation of different land uses reflects, at least in part, the absence of long-term societal commitment to SFM.
- ◆ Increasing the economic benefits derived from forests and forest resources is crucial to consolidating SFM. In more than half of the cases studies, however, the improvement in commercial opportunities for forest products and services continues to be weak, and very few examples are provided

on efforts to integrate primary producers into more lucrative value chains. In many cases more attention has been placed on the services forests provide (e.g. water provision, ecotourism, and carbon sequestration), but to date this has generally not resulted in tangible economic benefits for local actors.

- ◆ Capacity-building and technical-assistance activities have been carried out in most cases, but these efforts vary widely. Few cases indicate success in consolidating an approach to address rapidly evolving capacity-building needs. As a result, capacity-building efforts tend to be fragmented, with important gaps. Continuity has also been a challenge, since capacity-building and technical assistance have often been dependent on external sources of funding. However, cooperation among stakeholders appears to have reduced this dependency on outside sources of funding.
- ◆ Where available, sources of capital for investment in forestry operations and rural enterprise development tend to be from informal channels, and in a number of cases, lack of access to capital is seen as a major impediment to progress. The case studies point out that several forestry-sector characteristics diminish its attractiveness as a candidate for formal sources of capital.
- ◆ Problems of security and conflict appear to have a strong negative influence on efforts to move towards SFM. In case studies where such problems are reported, trends for the contribution of forest and forest resources to livelihoods are perceived as negative or at risk.
- ◆ Although a few of the cases imply landscape management over very broad areas, as an explicit approach, landscape or ecosystem management has not been pursued in most case studies. The shift in focus, however, from traditional products (e.g. timber) to ecosystem services (e.g. biodiversity, water, and carbon sequestration) and ecotourism is gradually resulting in more attention being placed on landscape and territorial processes.
- ◆ In some cases, the production of tree products is being shifted to areas outside of forests (tree planting on agricultural land and agroforestry) to increase production efficiency and mitigate environmental impacts within forests. This has also been necessary where restrictions have been placed on the harvesting and commercialisation of timber and wood for charcoal production from forests.
- ◆ The effort devoted to research across the case studies, in general, does not correspond to the broad knowledge and information demanded by SFM.
- ◆ In many of the case studies, monitoring to track the implementation and emerging outcomes of SFM, while recognised as important, is not pursued in a systematic fashion or the information

gathered is not effectively used. In some cases, monitoring programmes are incipient or in process of development; in others, forest cover is monitored but socio-economic indicators are monitored to a lesser degree. In cases where forest certification has been pursued, certification standards are monitored in a periodic fashion. Finally, the case studies do not report efforts to implement participatory monitoring approaches.

The preceding overview provides a sense of the overall progress made across the case studies with regards to the conditions included in the analytical framework and challenges that persist in addressing issues related to each condition. As can be seen, in general terms, the case studies indicate more progress in some conditions than others. Conditions like “enforcement of laws and regulations,” “reconciliation of different land uses,” “commercial opportunities, linkages to markets,” “security and conflict,” and the creation of a “public administration” that facilitates participation in SFM are still fraught with major challenges.

1.2.2 Interactions among prerequisite conditions

Though this overview across the case studies of each condition is informative, the application of the analytical framework within individual cases makes clear that these conditions do not operate in isolation; rather, they interact among themselves in complex ways. Implicit in the analytical framework is the hypothesis that if adequate efforts are made to address crucial issues related to each of the conditions, tangible progress towards SFM would be expected. In a few exceptional case studies, authors did report significant institutional efforts related to nearly all of the conditions in the analytical framework. At the other extreme, however, one finds case studies in which major deficiencies and/or problems were identified for many of the conditions, and in these cases, less favourable outcomes were to be expected.

This section focuses attention on interactions that appear to be influencing outcomes associated with livelihoods benefits and forest conditions. Both synergistic interactions that seem to favour positive outcomes and negative interactions constraining progress or undermining it altogether are of particular interest. A brief summary of the principal findings related to interactions among conditions within the case studies follows:

- ◆ Alignment among different sectoral policies and policy implementation favours positive outcomes, as do policies that recognise and build on strong

communal institutions based on long-term cultural and economic links with forest resources. Conflicting policies result in negative interactions. For example, policies that promote large-scale investment in agriculture and mining are incompatible with the goals of SFM and often fail to take into account eventual impacts on local livelihood strategies.

- ◆ While formal recognition of local rights to land and forests has taken place in most case studies, this has not been implemented in a systematic fashion. In cases where formal rights have not been recognised, the unclear and/or insecure rights to forest and trees still undermine the effectiveness of policies put in place to promote SFM. Lack of empowerment and/or exclusion from deliberations on forest management and decision-making further curtail participation in SFM.
- ◆ Policies to promote small-scale and community-based forest management are often rendered ineffective when arbitrary restrictions are placed on timber harvesting and commercialisation. Onerous bureaucratic processes for approval of management plans and harvesting permits also discourage participation in SFM. High transaction costs and inconsistencies in the way forest regulations are applied negatively impact the effectiveness of policies meant to promote SFM.
- ◆ Even in case studies in which considerable efforts have been made to establish favourable policies for SFM and encourage community involvement, corruption and illegality greatly diminish progress towards SFM. Weak and ineffective institutions often undermine policies seeking to promote SFM.
- ◆ In various case studies, negative impacts resulting from the lack of alignment among policies and between policies and their implementation are exacerbated by deficient technical and managerial capacities and lack of linkages between producers and attractive market opportunities.

As previously noted, in some case studies comprehensive efforts have been made to implement measures related to a wide range of conditions in the analytical framework, among others. These invaluable examples – Acre, Brazil [1]; Quintana Roo, Mexico [7]; India [13]; Canada [9]; Indonesia [14,15] – mostly report positive outcomes related to both contributions to livelihoods and forest condition. However, in the case of Quintana Roo, the positive outcomes result largely from past sectoral alignment and synergies rather than current policies. Other examples of synergistic interactions among conditions that contribute to positive trends in community forestry (CF) can be found in chapter 8 of Part II (summarised in 4.3.2. of Part III). These

conditions include: policy reform and alignment to create an enabling environment favourable to SFM; empowerment of local actors and respect for their cultural identity and tradition; capacity-building, including attention to capacities related to rural enterprise development; competent forest management; diversification of forest uses through technological innovation; and access to financial resources.

What becomes apparent in this analysis is that meaningful progress towards SFM requires a holistic approach that focuses adequate attention on all the conditions included in the analytical framework and that seeks to encourage synergistic interactions among them. Since conditions included in the analytical framework encompass aspects related to policies, institutions and governance, livelihoods, capacities, cultural and socio-economic aspects, and biophysical conditions, an interdisciplinary approach is necessary, with careful attention to the interactions among conditions for SFM and how these interactions favour or limit desired outcomes.

In some cases, interactions among conditions have resulted in mixed outcomes. Policies that restrict forest use for environmental reasons have in some cases favoured forest conditions while diminishing opportunities to increase economic benefits to local communities and contributions to their livelihoods. Policies that encourage foreign investment in industrial agriculture may result in enhanced economic opportunities while contributing to forest loss. In these cases, there are typically both winners and losers and trade-offs between economic and environmental concerns.

Considerable resources have been invested in creating and implementing policies; in capacity-building; and in many cases, in other aspects related to SFM. Some negative interactions cited, such as those caused by cumbersome bureaucratic processes, are a common drag on efforts to further SFM, making it difficult to achieve meaningful progress. Other interactions exercise an even greater negative impact on SFM, for example, restrictions on timber harvesting and commercialisation and lack of control of illegal logging. Finally, interactions that result from policies that encourage land-use change (e.g. concessions for industrial agriculture) induce change but, from the perspective of SFM, in an undesirable direction. For this reason, when analysing interactions among conditions, it is important to consider the magnitude of their likely impact on the viability of SFM. Taking into account the importance of the interaction among conditions, research and monitoring should explicitly focus more attention on these interdisciplinary processes and how they impact desired outcomes.

According to Newell (2001), complex systems (such as SFM) can be understood as dynamic networks of interactions and relationships, not simple aggregations of static entities. An important attribute

of interactions in complex systems is that they are non-linear in nature. In other words, changes induced in one condition may lead to responses greater or lesser than what would be expected or hoped for in the context of SFM. In more explicit terms, the efforts and resources invested in initiatives seeking to further SFM may or may not result in meaningful progress towards the underlying objectives of SFM since these inputs interact in a non-linear fashion with other attributes of the system.

Within the analytical framework, case study authors were also asked to report on “influences of regional/global processes on forest-related policies and behaviour in your region of study.” SFM has figured prominently in international forest-related policy processes and discourses for about 30 years. These processes include legally binding forest-related agreements (such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change) and non-legally binding instruments aiming at instituting SFM, such as the UN Forum on Forests. Wider discourses around decentralisation and participation have also supported the transfer of forest management authority and related decision-making from central government towards lower levels in the administrative hierarchy. Support has also been directed to different community-based and/or participatory forest management models. The increasing visibility of the rights of indigenous and other local communities in the global discourses and conflicts between legal and customary access to resources has led to efforts that to a certain degree have integrated community rights into national policies. It is possible to conclude that the various influences of the international processes and discourses are to some degree discernible in the different case studies.

At present, REDD+ seems to be the most visible and potentially influential of the international processes affecting forests in the case studies. Several report REDD+ related strategies and policy development and pilot projects; however, the perceived implications of this international process are not all positive from the perspective of SFM. On one hand, REDD+ is seen as offering a potentially important opportunity to enhance local forest-related development and SFM. On the other hand, risks and challenges inherent to the development of REDD+ schemes are also recognised, including the lack of clear linkages between REDD+ and community contribution to sustainable management of land and forests. In addition, there are risks that the perceived increased value of forests may lead governments to exclude communities or restrict their participation in forest management, shifting benefits from REDD+ in favour of large-scale investors (e.g. Cambodia [11], Nepal [16]).

Some case studies highlight international, mar-



Figure III 1.1 For advancing SFM it is important to strive to gain a more holistic understanding of the conditions shaping the local context for SFM and the non-linear interactions among these conditions.
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ket-based approaches, for example certification and legality verification, as a means to advance SFM. Unfortunately, the scope of these initiatives remains restricted by the limited demand for certified products at the global level. Voluntary certification schemes, such as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification in Indonesia, have been linked to better forest management, but they cannot address issues like unclear forest tenure and inconsistent policies.

EU FLEGT (European Union Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade)⁽¹⁾ and the Lacey Act in the United States seek to ensure that wood imported to the European Union or United States, respectively, is from legal sources and produced ac-

cording to the exporting country's legislation. These initiatives are rather recent and, especially in the case of the instruments under EU FLEGT, not yet fully operational. However, they show some potential for motivating the development of national legality verification systems and encouraging governments to address some of the main drivers of forest degradation and deforestation.

It becomes clear from the case studies that the globalisation of markets and investments is a strong force steering forest-related development in many countries. In some cases, it is leading to large-scale land concessions to the detriment of local forest-related development and livelihoods. In other instances these processes could potentially lead to employment creation that engages local actors in forest-related production and/or the provision of ecosystem services and their integration into value chains. This potential is, however, often restricted by the limited opportunities for communities and small-scale forest enterprises to access markets and generate income from forests. How the effects of globalisation impact the local level and whether they support or are antagonistic to sustainable forest-related development is and will largely be shaped by the different conditions for SFM analysed in this volume.

⁽¹⁾ The EU Timber Regulation and Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) are part of the EU's FLEGT Action Plan. VPAs are agreements made between the EU and timber-producing countries that export timber and timber products to the European Union. A country that has a VPA and an operational licensing system can issue FLEGT licences for legally produced timber and timber products. The EU Timber Regulation prohibits operators in Europe from placing illegally harvested timber and products derived from illegal timber on the EU market. All timber and timber products with a FLEGT licence automatically comply with the EU Timber Regulation (<http://www.euflegt.efi.int/about-flegt>).

1.2.3 Reflections on the way forward

The diversity of cases included in this volume illustrates that the forces and inputs influencing and shaping important conditions for SFM originate from different scales – global to local. As also discussed, the complex, non-linear interactions among these forces lead to varied outcomes in different contexts. Understanding these interactions and how they influence outcomes is of crucial importance for designing and developing policies and measures to advance SFM (Figure III 1.1).

These important conclusions make it evident that the advancement of SFM requires that careful attention be focused on how influences originating from different scales interact and how these interactions lead to desired outcomes (or not) in local livelihoods and forest extent and condition. It is especially important to track outcomes since, as has been pointed out, measures related to prerequisite conditions in the analytical framework may be taken without meeting the underlying objectives of SFM. This reflection, perhaps, encompasses the most important conclusion of this volume: that outcomes of SFM should be monitored on a continual basis to detect trends

associated with the contributions of SFM to local livelihoods and to forest extent and condition and that this information should be used in further adapting policies and management practices for achieving desired outcomes. This tracking of outcomes would reflect a serious commitment to the underlying objectives of SFM and would indicate to stakeholders when measures are collectively achieving a certain degree of success or when they are falling short. Unfavourable trends would send a strong signal that additional efforts are required to achieve SFM objectives, implying the need to better understand the complex underlying causes of undesirable outcomes.

One may conclude from a review of the case studies that there is no recipe for success and that a certain degree of flexibility is required to respond to varying situations in different contexts. The prerequisite conditions, however, are useful since they serve to direct attention to aspects that have been observed to be important for progressing towards SFM. Since it is clear that these aspects interact in complex ways, stakeholders should be encouraged to strive to gain a more holistic understanding of the context in which SFM is being pursued and the interacting processes and emerging trade-offs affecting SFM.