



## CIFOR Poverty and Environment Network (PEN)

### The questions

Forests and other natural resources are crucial to the livelihoods of millions of poor people worldwide. But just how important are forests for poverty alleviation? To what extent do forests help lift people out of poverty, or are they mainly useful as gap-fillers and safety nets preventing extreme hardship? Which types of forests and products are most useful for the poor? How do different management regimes and policies affect the benefits poor people derive from forests? Can we design effective strategies to alleviate poverty?

Answers to these questions are essential for designing effective policies and meaningful projects based on natural resources. Yet, we have surprisingly little solid knowledge to answer the questions adequately.

### What will PEN achieve?

PEN aims to fill the gap in knowledge through the systematic collection of socio-economic data in a variety of tropical ecosystems. The global and country level analyses of the role of forests in poverty alleviation will build a knowledge base to help formulate national and global policy, build capacity among researchers in developing countries, and assist conservation and development agencies better achieve pro-poor outcomes. The network will play a major role in putting forestry issues onto the poverty agenda. PEN will provide opportunities to disseminate research results, exchange information and experience, and host workshops to facilitate collaboration during the analysis and synthesis work.

### Who is in the network?

PEN is a collaborative effort of CIFOR, universities, and regional and international institutions from various countries and is aimed at obtaining high quality data on forest-poverty links. The core of the network will be young researchers, PhD students, their supervisors, and CIFOR scientists. The PhD students will be affiliated with collaborating universities or other research institutes within the country of research.



INTERNATIONAL  
FOUNDATION FOR  
SCIENCE

The International Foundation for Science (IFS) is a PEN partner, and will provide research grants to PEN participants from developing countries. [[www.ifs.se](http://www.ifs.se)]



## Global data set

Fifteen to twenty-five case studies will be undertaken by PhD students and young researchers, each typically covering 200-400 households. A core set of data will be collected at each site using a common format to build up a global data set. The study sites will, as far as possible, be chosen to get a representative data set that cover different geographical regions, forest types (dry vs. wet forests), forest tenure regimes (open access, private forest, community forest), levels of poverty (chronically poor, moderately poor and rich), infrastructure (access to transport, market-near vs. remote areas), and population density (high, moderate and low).



## Capacity building

PEN seeks to improve the overall quality of policy analysis related to forest-poverty links. A web page and a manual with research guidelines and tools will be available for the benefit of students and researchers working on poverty-environment linkages. Workshops will be held both to refine methodologies and to present and synthesize research results.

## How to get involved

Interested students, universities, institutions, and individuals should contact CIFOR: [cifor-pen@cgiar.org](mailto:cifor-pen@cgiar.org). For further information see [www.cifor.cgiar.org/pen](http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/pen).

*Welcome to PEN. Not to fence you, but to help writing good research papers and solving key forestry-poverty problems!*

This activity forms part of CIFOR's Forest and Livelihoods program - it represents CIFOR's "center without walls" policy with the main co-ordinator based at the Norwegian Agricultural University, a member of the organizing group based at Charles Darwin University (Australia), and involves CIFOR scientists on three continents.

Photos by Mauri Rautkari (WWF), Carol Colfer, Manuel Ruiz Perez, Patricia Shanley, Michael Hailu, Joachim Nguiebouri and Brian Belcher.



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