

The purpose of these *Key Sheets* is to provide decision-makers with an easy and up-to-date point of reference on issues relating to the provision of support for sustainable livelihoods.

The sheets are designed for those who are managing change and who are concerned to make well-informed implementation decisions. They aim to distil theoretical debate and field experience so that it becomes easily accessible and useful across a range of situations. Their purpose is to assist in the process of decision-making rather than to provide definitive answers.

The sheets address three broad sets of issues:

- Service Delivery
- Resource Management
- Policy Planning and Implementation

A list of contact details for organisations is provided for each sub-series.

Overview of the debate

National forest programmes (nfp's) are a globally adopted framework for forest policy, planning and implementation at the country level. They cover a wide range of implementation approaches to sustainable forest management, aiming to achieve the conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity and an equitable sharing of forest resources, in accordance with a country's specific priorities, needs and context.

This concept is a product of the post-Rio forest policy dialogue, built upon commitments made at the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). It is based on the premise that there are common elements that should be part of any national programme for sustainable forest management. Nfp implementation is now called for by the United Nations Forum on Forests. Nfp's are acknowledged by the Convention on Biological Diversity and other forest-related agreements as a key mechanism supporting the development of sustainable forest management in all countries.

Over the last five years the main issues relating to nfp's have been:

- Recognising the nfp concept as a country-driven policy and planning tool, which is also responsive to multilateral environmental, economic and trade agreements.
- Linking nfp's to the wider national processes of sustainable development and poverty alleviation to help address the underlying causes of deforestation, forest degradation and illegal forestry practices.
- Moving beyond a concern over the content of forest policy to emphasise the process of planning and implementation. Major themes include how to improve participation, co-ordination, partnerships, transparency, communication and capacity building.
- Redefining the role of the state and other stakeholders in forest management, having recognised that existing public-sector institutions alone are not able to respond effectively to the new and diverse demands made on forests.
- Determining how to strengthen implementation at the national level and how international support can best advance these essentially country-driven processes.

Key issues in decision making

Whilst there has been considerable discussion surrounding the above issues, their resolution remains incomplete, with considerable country differences. Continuing challenges include the following:

Good governance has to be on the national agenda Nfp's are first and foremost broadly based, country-driven processes, which depend on strong leadership from within government. Forest policy and legislation need to be major elements of nfp's. Recent revision of both these instruments has led to increased recognition of traditional and customary rights of, *inter alia*, indigenous groups, local communities, forest dwellers and forest owners in some cases, notably in Latin America and East Africa.

In many countries the forest sector is heavily regulated. The institutions charged with the responsibility of overseeing the regulatory system are often weak, with regulations not being enforced. This imbalance must be addressed by the nfp. This applies not only to those institutions that hold responsibility for forests, but also covers those not traditionally at the centre of discussions on forests, such as ministries of the environment, finance and economic planning, agriculture, energy, and water.

Linkages between sectoral and inter-sectoral planning are very poor in many countries: nfp's have the potential to raise awareness of the importance of forests and their contribution to national development. Explicit links still need to be established between nfp's and the broader environmental, economic and social sectors, and vice versa.

Decentralization has become a major political theme that affects national planning processes. Nfp's need to be understood not as a process for central planning but as part of decentralisation and devolution efforts. Collaborative forest management approaches (involving local people, the private sector and other stakeholders) can be model cases for elaboration of institutional arrangements in the context of decentralisation. Participatory mechanisms that involve all interested parties are becoming a prominent feature of nfp's. Attention now needs to be given to establishing conflict-resolution procedures at both the national and local levels, as forests are the scene of overlapping social, economic and environmental interests.



National Forest Programmes *continued*

DFID and DGIS Experience

- **C & S America**
Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Peru
- **Africa** Ghana, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda
- **Asia** India, Indonesia

Expertise

- Collaborative Partnership on Forests www.un.org/esa/sustdev/unffnetwork.htm
- European Forest Institute www.efi.fi
- GTZ IWRP Project: www.gtz.de/forest-policy/english/NFP/nfp.html
- International Institute for Environment and Development www.iied.org/forestry
- Ministerial Conference on the protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) www.mcpfe.org/index.html
- NFP Facility, FAO www.fao.org/forestry/foris/
- PROFOR www.profor.info/pages/lessons/nationalforest.html

There has been much interest in privatising parts of the national forest estate, and/or the bodies responsible for public forests, in search of greater efficiency and equity, to reduce direct costs on the state and to access new sources of finance and experience for sustainable forest management. New and innovative financing mechanisms – to help pay for the environmental services provided by forests and their derived benefits – now need to be developed. This reflects a broadening of approaches to the valuation of all the functions of forests. Payments from tourism and carbon services may offer an opportunity to part-finance forest management. At the same time, it is recognised that other incentives than cash, e.g., secure land tenure or better access to natural resources for local people, are strong driving forces for increased domestic investment in forest management.

The international context also matters Nfp's are being strengthened in many countries, as a response to the continuing pressure on forests around the world. They need to be used to mainstream the instruments and concepts of multilateral environmental agreements and processes into national forest policy and planning. The main agreements and processes are the:

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA)
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- World Trade Organisation (WTO).

In April 2002, the sixth Conference of Parties to the CBD committed itself to sustainable forest management and called for synergies between National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and NFPs to be developed. This synergy now needs to be captured.

Nfp's depend on the open and timely flow of information about the forest sector – something that continues to hold back sustainable forest management. International organizations have a role to play in this regard. The new NFP Facility hosted at FAO will support capacity building, networking, partnerships and the exchange of experiences and information relating to nfp's. Another initiative, PROFOR (the Programme on Forests), has started to document country-level experiences with nfp's, and has examined a number of critical thematic issues, notably livelihoods, governance and financing strategies. In addition, relevant regional fora have a role to play in knowledge sharing. The challenge now lies in ensuring that all this information reaches the people on the ground, and vice-versa.

The role of donors is becoming clearer in less developed countries Nfp's should be used to improve donor co-ordination and attract developmental assistance, thereby increasing the effectiveness of national funding. Sector-Wide Approaches (SWAs) represent one area of potential synergy through which development assistance can be channelled in support of the policy framework established by an nfp. Another important bridge is the link between forests and poverty that can be demonstrated by ensuring that nfp's support the PRSP processes.

Key literature

- Glück, P., G. Oesten, H. Schanz and K.R. Volz (eds) (1999) 'Formulation and implementation of national forest programmes'. 3 Volumes. *EFI Proceedings* 30. European Forestry Institute, Finland.
- Savenije, H. (2000) 'National forest programmes: From political concept to practical instrument in developing countries'. *Theme Studies Series* 3. Forests, Forestry and Biological Diversity Support Group. Wageningen: National Reference Centre for Nature Management (EC LNV). www.minlnv.nl/inm/
- Shepherd, G. (2001) 'PROFOR: The UNDP Programme on Forests. Mid-Term Review. Final Report'. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- UNFF (2002) *Report of the Secretary-General on National Forest Programmes*. www.un.org/esa/sustdev/unffdocs/unff_ss2-nfps.pdf

Key Sheets are available on the Internet at: www.keysheets.org
or through the websites of DFID and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs



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