

TENTH EXECUTIVE FOREST POLICY COURSE

REVISITING THE POVERTY REDUCTION AGENDA IN THE CONTEXT OF SDGs: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY

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PREPARATION OF POLICY BRIEFS

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Organization of the
United Nations



Asia-Pacific
Forestry
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WHAT IS A POLICY BRIEF?

- ❑ A Policy Brief is a “short, neutral summary of what is known about a particular issue or problem. Policy briefs are a form of report designed to facilitate policy-making” (Eisele, 2006).
- ❑ The main purpose is to “succinctly evaluate policy options regarding a specific issue, for a specific policy-maker audience” (Eisele).
- ❑ Policy-makers need to make practical decisions under time-constraints, so the brief should provide evidence and actionable recommendations.

STEPS INVOLVED

- Identification of topic/ issue on which the policy brief has to be prepared.
- Listing of critical decision issues – Generally policy briefs address issues on which decisions need to be taken or views/ opinions are to be formulated.
- Assemble and analyse available information.
- Identify the various options and their implications.
- Prepare a short-list of implementable options.
- Prepare a set of recommendations on what decisions/ actions are to be taken.

PROCESS TO BE ADOPTED

- A provisional list of topics/ issues have been prepared.
- Each group to select one from among the listed topics.
- Identify policy relevant issues pertaining to the topic on which decisions are to be taken.

PROPOSED TOPICS

1. Making forest policies pro-poor
2. Reforming the forestry departments to accomplish the poverty reduction objective.
3. Forest tenure and poverty alleviation
4. Improving the non-wood forest products value chain to enhance rural income.
5. Small holder tree growing and poverty alleviation.
6. Potential for enhancing rural women's participation in forestry
7. Improving the economic viability of small scale forestry enterprises.
8. Enhancing the role of forestry in accomplishing SDG 13 – Climate Action.
9. Implementation of pro-poor PES for watershed protection.
10. Management of protected areas through local community participation.



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PROCESS TO BE ADOPTED

- Identify the larger context and the decision issues.
- Discuss the pros and cons of the issues especially the technical, social, policy, legal, economic and institutional dimensions.
- Develop a structure for the policy brief.
- Each day prepare a part/ section of the policy brief.
- Draft, edit and make a presentation of the brief.



PROPOSED STRUCTURE

- ❑ As the very name indicates, policy briefs should be very brief and should help to capture attention of key stakeholders within the shortest time.
- ❑ Length: Depending on the topic and the nature of decision being made, policy brief could vary from 1 to 6 pages.
- ❑ In the present exercise we will keep the length as between 4 to 6 pages.
- ❑ Draft, edit and make a presentation of the brief.

Remember...

Policymakers are extremely busy people, and are probably not specialists in your area.

They are likely to read only something that...

- ❖ Looks attractive.
- ❖ Appears interesting.
- ❖ Is short and easy to read.

OUTLINE

- ❑ Background (Half page)
- ❑ Issues proposed to be addressed (Half page)
- ❑ Analysis of the issues summarizing available information on different views and ideas (provide facts and figures) - 2 pages.
- ❑ Important conclusions including the options available and their implications (1-2 pages)
- ❑ Recommendations on possible courses of action (half page)
- ❑ References (Literature reviewed and other sources of information) – Half page



Institutional frameworks that fail to provide incentives to invest in forest management and a succession of high-level national and international priorities in forestry mean that field-level activities are often overlooked. The health and vitality of forests in the Asia-Pacific region and their productivity are often compromised as a result. With demands on forests increasing and climate change threatening, efforts to maintain ecosystem services and benefits from forests should focus attention on effective management at the field level.

Many of the day-to-day field-level activities that physically determine the future of forests and forestry are often overlooked: monitoring of forest health and vitality; fire management; forest patrolling; silvicultural activities; reduced impact logging; and forest inventories among others (Box 1, Box 2).



The long life cycle of trees and forests means that in spite of current high-level priorities, long-term management activities must continue in order to ensure the sustained flow of benefits. Without focus on practical aspects of forestry, it is possible that, by the time climate agreements and international dialogues are translated to field levels, a protracted period of institutional strengthening and training will be required for results to be realized.

The enthusiasm at national and international levels for prioritization of development or sectoral objectives - poverty alleviation, devolution and decentralization, climate change mitigation, forest law enforcement and governance - although of great importance, can divert attention from field-level activities.

and where demands for wood, non-wood forest products and ecosystem services are increasing - lack of capacity and knowledge are often highly constraining. For example, local-level fire management is rarely supported despite education and rapid response being the most efficient ways to control forest fires. Similarly, lack of forest rangers and guards means that biodiversity losses continue to occur and carbon stocks are at greater risk. Reduced impact logging is rarely practiced in the region despite its clear environmental and economic benefits.

Often, the reality in the field is that forest management cannot keep pace with developments in national and international dialogues. In fact, high-level decisions may even go completely unnoticed by the grassroots. While theory, science and policy may advance, at the local level - where the trees are growing

Among the challenges to implementing sustainable forest management, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) has drawn attention to the almost universal lack of resources needed to manage tropical forests properly: staff, equipment, vehicles, etc. (ITTO 2011). In relation to protected area management, WWF has highlighted the need for increased attention to field-level issues including management planning, monitoring and evaluation, budgeting and awareness raising, staffing and law enforcement (WWF 2004, 2007).

Box 1. Reduced Impact Logging

Because of the generally low quality of harvesting operations in the region, logging has perhaps the most significant impact on forest health and vitality. Associated degradation reduces not only the present value of forests, but reduces regenerative capacity and leaves a legacy of low forest productivity, reduced commercial viability and impaired ecological functioning. Reduced impact logging (RIL) significantly lessens damage to the residual stand and is economically justified by savings from reduced damage and future benefits resulting from increases in forest growth and yield.

Thank you



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