

DFID

Department For
International
Development

partnerships



forests **MATTER**
THE DFID APPROACH TO FORESTS

MATTER

Today, one in five people live in abject poverty. The UK Government's Department for International Development - DFID - has signed up to a clear and achievable **aim**: by 2015, to see that proportion reduced to one in ten. In 2015, we intend to set further targets until we eliminate abject poverty.

forests **MATTER** explains how DFID's forestry work will support this aim. Combining responsive guidelines with new approaches, it reflects the outcome of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, our own experience and that of other development agencies. *forests* **MATTER** replaces the Forestry Strategy published in 1993. We consulted widely with UK and international organisations to develop approaches which we believe will make a difference. Because **forests** are important to us all.

Forests contain up to half of all terrestrial biodiversity. Their role as 'carbon sinks' is highlighted when they are lost: deforestation and degradation of tropical forests creates almost a quarter of global CO₂ emissions. At a local level, the issues take a sharper focus. For the world's poor, trees and forests are a vital part of everyday survival:

- *forests give 2000 million people fuel to cook with*
- *in the tropics, forests meet a large part of the needs of several hundred million people: from wood products and food to medicine and income*
- *trees increase poor farmers' security - they smooth out seasonal flows of produce and provide a reserve of 'capital' for emergencies*
- *forests help agriculture and fisheries by recycling nutrients, stabilising soil and influencing local and global climate*
- *in 18 African countries, forests represent over 10% of GDP*

In the future, there will be fewer forests. As a vital lifeline in poor people's lives, and as a global environmental resource, we must therefore concentrate on making forests sustainable by better management. Good managers are well-informed, responsive, organised and focus on delivery. All these factors underpin DFID's approach to forestry. Good management also needs vision. Such a vision exists, and Britain is committed to support it.

aim The Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has proposed a global effort to tackle extreme poverty. Targets include halving the proportion of people in abject poverty and reversing the trend in degradation of natural resources by 2015. Environmental degradation hits the poor hardest. The factors causing it must be tackled if DFID is to meet its key priority – improving the lives of the global poor.

Several types of **forest** are relevant to development: closed forests with their unbroken tree-top canopies (for example rainforests), open woodlands with their widely-spaced trees, plantations and trees on farms.

In closed forests and woodlands, the priorities are to:

- support management approaches that share responsibility and benefits with local people
- help build capacity to regulate and control harvesting, paying close attention to the process of awarding forest concessions and the reform of forest pricing policy
- attempt to maximise development and conservation benefits
- increase efforts to conserve genetic resources in managed forests through research and by promoting better harvesting techniques

Nowadays, forest products increasingly come from trees that people have planted. DFID will support farmers wishing to plant more trees on farms, by helping them overcome obstacles such as unclear or insecure rights to the resource, difficulties marketing tree products and poor access to the right kind of planting stock. Forest plantations will become more important. DFID will promote investment from private and public sources which delivers social and environmental benefits.



CO-OPERATION

DFID wants to help people in developing countries gain long-term benefits from their trees, while also helping secure the global environmental benefits that forests offer. DFID's support to forestry will reflect its focus on a limited number of **partner countries**. In most cases, these partnerships are long-standing - although the country focus also reflects DFID's increased concentration on the poorer countries of Africa and South Asia.

forests MATTER is an approach dedicated to *negotiated objectives* - developing consensus through a free flow of information, and by listening to the needs, priorities and objectives of our partner countries. Interventions emerge through ongoing negotiation and open discussion. They might include policy and sector planning, institutional development, education and training, forest management, conservation, forest information systems and research. The important point is that whatever the intervention, it is firmly based on mutual agreement.

DFID works with partner countries through our regional development divisions and country aid management offices. This involves close co-operation at all levels: from ministries and forest departments to community organisations, research institutions and the private sector. We support our forest work through parallel activities in other sectors such as trade policy and agriculture.

First questions are important: they define long-term answers. They are the start of a process of jointly identifying problems and solutions. What does a partner country and its people want from the forest? What types of forests are most useful to its development? How can it conserve and maximise the benefits of its forests? How can it best apply **international agreements**? How can DFID facilitate these complex decisions?

Answers to such questions may involve short-term projects, often providing technical co-operation. Yet the need for sustainable solutions demands that we also look at longer term approaches, building greater ownership while reducing uncertainty. DFID is therefore working to develop long-term partnership approaches such as sector investment programmes, where the donor community gets together to develop a strategy alongside partner governments. Funds and expertise can then be pooled, adding value to all our efforts.

We work closely with other development organisations, trying to make sure our work dovetails with theirs. DFID contributed to and uses the European Commission's Guidelines for Forest Sector Development Co-operation. These promote coherence between the European Commission and EU member states. DFID also learns from, works with and influences the policies of **multilateral organisations** through governing councils, involvement in developing international agreements and in forums like the European Tropical Forestry Advisers Group and the Forestry Advisers Group. Within the UK we continue to work closely with the Forestry Commission and the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, the Commonwealth Development Corporation, academic institutions, NGOs and the Tropical Forest Forum.

Present **partner countries** for forestry include in AFRICA Cameroon, Ghana, Malawi, South Africa, Zimbabwe ASIA India, Nepal, Sri Lanka LATIN AMERICA Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Guyana, Mexico and the countries of the EASTERN CARIBBEAN. We also respond to opportunities to work with countries of the former Eastern bloc, whose economies are in transition. This is done in line with our strategies promoting economic reform and improving environmental management in Russia, in Central and Eastern Europe, and in Central Asia.



DFID will work with our partner countries to find practical ways to interpret and implement relevant **international agreements**. These include the Biological Diversity and Climate Change Conventions agreed at the 1992 Earth Summit. There is also an Intergovernmental Forum on Forests. This will take forward and monitor the implementation of actions agreed by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Forests which reported to the Earth Summit 2 in June 1997. DFID will continue to support the work of the International Tropical Timber Organisation.



A significant part of the UK development effort is via **multilateral organisations** such as the European Union, international financial institutions like the World Bank, UN agencies concerned with forestry and the International Tropical Timber Organisation. In addition we provide extra support for specific work by these organisations. DFID sometimes helps finance the employment of British forestry advisers in multilateral organisations.

FOR ALL

People's needs from trees and forests vary between different groups and different places. Economic, demographic and social change will alter a country's demands on its forests. As populations increase, they create pressure for agricultural land. Conflict is inevitable. Yet a coherent and well-designed framework at national and local levels can help manage this conflict by negotiating trade-offs. The goal: a fairer distribution of forest benefits.

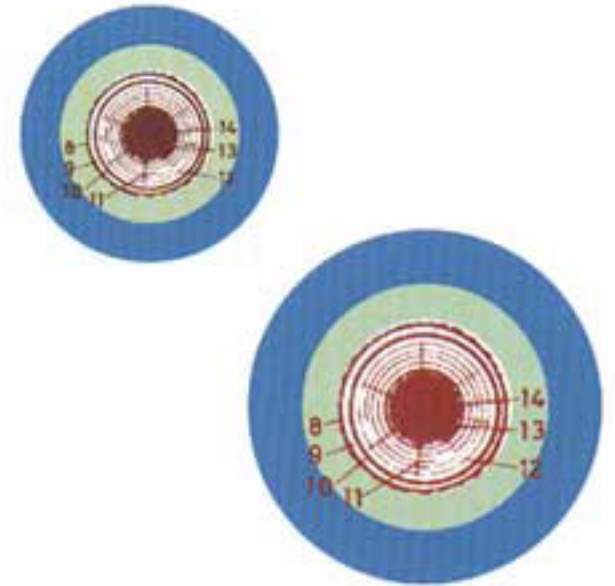
Conflict often spurs new thinking about the functions and structure of public institutions. DFID will use its expertise in this area to:

- *support institutional development in government and **NGOs***
- *help promote representative local government*
- *apply lessons from the **sharing forest management** review*
- *promote participation by women and other disadvantaged groups as both agents of and beneficiaries in development activities*
- *work with the private sector to promote socially and environmentally responsible private investment policies*

A **national forest programme** is key to the approach, and DFID will support their development in partner countries without one. Such programmes should tie in with a national sustainable development strategy, and provide a framework for careful planning and legislative change where necessary. They should also encourage re-investment of enough revenue to maintain the productivity of forests in the long term.

Such approaches not only reduce poverty. They also help achieve conservation goals. A forest is more likely to be conserved when there are more people with a long-term interest in its survival. This commitment to local participation is part of a broader shift in forestry from simple models to more complex processes.

One way DFID works with non-governmental organisations – **NGOs** – is through the Joint Funding Scheme (JFS) where DFID matches funds provided by NGOs. Although managed independently of the country programmes, we will look to increase the sharing of experience between the JFS and country programmes to improve the delivery of both.



The participatory forest management review looked at experience spanning 25 years, examining the benefits and costs of involving wider groups of stakeholders in forest management. African, Asian and Latin American workshops fed in regional expertise. **sharing forest management** presents key findings and best practice. The report is on the DFID web-site at www.oneworld.org/dfid

national forest programmes (explained in a Food and Agriculture Organisation [FAO] report, 'Basic principles and operational guidelines') provide a way to negotiate national objectives, while simultaneously putting in place a framework to work through ideas at local level. Linking national objectives to local ones helps give poorer people a greater voice. The 1997 UN General Assembly Special Session on environment and development called for all countries to have national sustainable development strategies that 'reflect the contributions and responsibilities of all interested parties' in place by 2002.

forest MANAGEMENT

Modern forest management starts with good quality information. Research shows what needs to be done. Transparent evaluation identifies what kinds of interventions are working - and why.

DFID supports the collection and management of information through a variety of methods, including forest resource accounting, which can give countries manageable information on which to base decisions. We also fund specific research projects and support schemes to help our partner countries build their research capacity. The **Forestry Research Programme** supports centrally-funded research guided by DFID's **Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy**.

Internationally, we support the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) and the Iwokrama International Forestry Research Programme.

DFID is committed to helping establish **criteria and indicators** for more effective management of forests. We are also developing better ways to evaluate transparently the effectiveness of our work - and that of others - in order to demonstrate our impact on DFID's poverty reduction priority.

Some developing countries have already made much progress in building sustainable systems for harvesting forest products. We are keen to help them take advantage of independently audited certification and labelling schemes that allow consumers to recognise this.

The **Forestry Research Programme** is designed to complement and support country partnerships. We respond to priority areas identified at national, regional and international levels when the UK can offer relevant expertise. The emphasis is multi-disciplinary, and encourages links between UK and developing country institutions, as well as with regional and international centres and networks. We assess the economic and social impact of the application of research we support.

A strategic approach is vital to development. The **Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy** is one of a number of related strategies developed by DFID. Forestry work also directly supports the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy, particularly key objectives like sustainable food production, improving food security and promoting technologies that conserve resources. Important contributions to forest sector objectives come from other areas of DFID, especially work promoting better education, health and government.

Judging the quality of forest management requires agreed **criteria and indicators**. Considerable international efforts are underway to establish these and DFID continues to support them.



'Every generation has the moral duty to reach out to the poor and needy and to try to create a more just world. But the present generation has to rise to this challenge otherwise global warming, population growth, environmental degradation, spreading deserts, polluted and overfished oceans and water shortages will create catastrophes that will endanger the life of everyone - rich and poor, north and south, developed and developing.'

Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development

By thinking about tomorrow's forests today, we can make sure they keep providing for as many people as possible. DFID's support for learning will help a new generation develop their forest management skills. While there is still much to learn, there is already a great deal of experience at our disposal - often among those poor in wealth but rich in knowledge. We must be sure to use it.

The message emerging from all those involved - whether poor farmers or professional foresters - is beginning to converge: if informed people can talk and work together, real and enduring change is possible.



'If we are serious about sustainable development, we must show that we are serious about sustainable forest management.'

Tony Blair, Prime Minister

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