



C&I implementation on the agenda

International expert consultation on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management

2–4 March 2004

Cebu City, the Philippines

Nearly 50 experts from over 30 countries gathered in Cebu City, the Philippines in March to make recommendations on how to enhance the implementation of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management (C&I), including improving liaison and communication between the nine C&I processes and promoting a common understanding of terms.

The meeting, hosted and chaired by the Government of the Philippines and sponsored by ITTO and FAO, arrived at a series of recommendations, including: the establishment of an international advisory group on C&I to address technical and policy issues common to the processes; assistance from established to newer processes; and support for the establishment of process secretariats where these do not already exist.

When finalised the report of the meeting will be posted on the ITTO and FAO websites. It will also be presented at the 4th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in May this year, where C&I are among the key agenda items.

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China considers accounting for forest benefits

Research on value accounting for tropical forest environmental resources—bringing them in line with national economic accounting systems in China

3–5 March 2004

Beijing, China

This workshop was hosted by the Chinese Academy of Forestry under ITTO PROJECT PD 39/98 REV 2 (M). It was attended by about 60 people, including representatives of the Chinese State Forestry Administration, China's State Statistics Bureau and the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, and participants from eight ITTO member countries.

During the last decade many countries have adopted policies in which environmental protection has taken a prominent place. However, despite such efforts, environmental degradation continues in many parts of the world. One of the problems is the lack of monetary value that conventional economics places on the global, regional and local-scale services provided by ecosystems. Forest resource accounting, or 'green' accounting, is an attempt to address this problem by including environmental values in national economic accounts.

This workshop allowed the ITTO project team from the Chinese Academy of Forestry to present its findings in four key reports: a framework for tropical forest resource accounting, a framework for integrating tropical forest assets into the national accounting system, and two case-studies that

examined the potential for forest-resource accounting in Hainan Province. The workshop also heard papers from other Chinese and international experts on experiences in natural resource accounting.

Participants agreed with an independent evaluator who reported that the ITTO project had produced a significant impact during its four years of implementation, particularly in raising awareness among Chinese economists and policy-makers of the role of ecosystem products and services in national well-being and of the need to account for these in mainstream economics. The project has stimulated debate in China's mass media about the social and environmental values of the country's tropical forests, helped to train several research students, and facilitated close links between key government agencies at the national and provincial levels. Through its case-studies it has also opened the way for provinces to adopt natural resource accounting into their accounting systems and should therefore encourage greater efforts to 'balance the books' in environmental health. Although change to national accounts could take some time, the level of interest in China in this sort of approach looks set to grow quickly.

The Chinese versions of the project's four main reports are now being printed, and English, French and Spanish versions are under preparation. For more information and copies of the project documents contact: Mr Hou Yuanzhao or Ms Wu Shuirong, Research Institute of Forestry Policy and Information, Chinese Academy of Forestry, Wanshoushan, Haidian District, Beijing 100091, China; Tel 86-10-6288 9731; Fax 86-10-6288 4836; huyuanzhao@tom.com; yuling@forestry.ac.cn, wushr2000@263.netp. Visit www.itto.or.jp to view the workshop papers.

Biodiversity talks

7th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity

9–20 February 2004

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

This conference was attended by over 2300 people, representing 161 governments as well as United Nations agencies, non-governmental organisations, intergovernmental organisations, Indigenous and local communities, academia and industry. Delegates adopted 33 decisions on, among other things: biodiversity and tourism; monitoring and indicators; the ecosystem approach; biodiversity and climate change; sustainable use; invasive alien species; the Strategic Plan; mountain biodiversity; inland water ecosystems; marine and coastal biodiversity; protected areas; access and benefit-sharing; technology transfer and cooperation; Article 8(j) (traditional knowledge); incentive measures; communication, education and public awareness; scientific and technical cooperation and the clearing-house mechanism; financial resources and mechanism; and national reporting. A Ministerial Segment convened on two days and adopted the Kuala Lumpur Ministerial Declaration, in which ministers commit, among other things, "our governments to integrate biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of its components into socioeconomic development".

Adapted from the summary report of the Earth Negotiations Bulletin, www.iisd.ca. Texts of decisions are available at www.biodiv.org