

Making forests in the developing world work for people and nature

The Global Network of IUFRO-WFSE for Sustainable Development and Well-being of People

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The mission of IUFRO's Special Project on World Forests, Society and Environment (WFSE) is to amend the existing gap between policy-makers and scientists in the formulation and application of policies in forest-related issues in support of sustainable development and well-being of people. The primary objectives are to provide a platform for cross-sectoral discussions between policy-makers and scientists, and – most importantly – to feed that discussion with innovative, critical scientific analysis of the existing research results on the complex interrelations between forests, society and the environment.

The backbone of the network consists of 10 internationally reputed research institutes, both in the North and the South, each contributing to the planning, implementation and dissemination of the project's activities and products. The WFSE process of both horizontal and vertical collaboration supports the innovative and critical approach in the extensive non-bureaucratic working teams. In Phase I (2002-2006) WFSE focused on how changing paradigms have been resonating in global and regional arenas, specifically in the new concepts of forest governance, in environmental services of forested ecosystems, in contribution of forests to livelihoods and poverty alleviation, and in the changing views to planted forests. A review article on paradigm changes on each continent was produced by local forestry experts. In addition, other cross-cutting issues were analyzed, like forest assessments, agroforestry research, capacity development and the role of traditional knowledge.

The results were presented and debated in several major international processes and congresses. Summarized presentations were produced - for disseminating and training purposes - on each thematic issue and also on the continental reports.

The major driving theme for Phase II (2007-2010) will be determined later in 2007. With increased emphasis on regional issues, efforts will be further strengthened to incorporate more Southern scientists to the network.