

Coordinator's Report

GFIS-Africa

After 4 ½ years of implementation, **the EC-funded GFIS Africa Project has come to an end.** This project, the single largest specific-purpose project ever implemented by IUFRO-SPDC, commenced in January 2000 and provided a total of 1 million EURO for developing the African component of the Global Forest Information Service. With two familiarisation and

metadata mobilisation campaigns implemented in Nigeria and Tanzania the project has been concluded at the end of June 2004. A special report about these two events is presented in this issue. The final report to the EC will be submitted in September. It is also planned to prepare a synthesis of project achievements that will be made available through the Internet.

FORNESSA at UNFF4

I am also very pleased to report on **FORNESSA's participation in the United Nations Forum on Forests' 4th Session in Geneva in May 2004.** In line with FORNESSA's mission to articulate and advocate African forest research agenda and development issues in global fora, Dr. Joseph Cobbinah (Director of FORIG, Ghana) and Dr. Atse Yapi (FORNESSA Secretary and IUFRO-

SPDC Regional Coordinator) represented the science and technology community during the multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSD). Other scientists from FORNESSA member institutions actively contributed to the preparations of a discussion paper as an input to the MSD session. For more details on this and the results of the meeting please refer to the respective article in this issue.

Preparing and Writing Research Proposals

A training course on preparing and writing research proposals has been conducted in Sabah, Malaysia, by IUFRO-SPDC in cooperation with the Forest Research Institute Malay-

sia and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ). This joint initiative contributed to the strengthening of the cooperation in Asia. For details please refer to the article on page 17.

IUFRO World Congress 2005

Preparations for **the IUFRO World Congress 2005 in Brisbane, Australia,** are under way. IUFRO-SPDC offers four courses to be organised as pre-congress training events. For more information on these courses and registration for the Scientist Assistance Programme please see the box below or visit the Congress web site at

<http://www.iufro2005.com>.

IUFRO-SPDC will also contribute to the organisation of scientific sessions at the Congress. In a

joint effort involving two IUFRO Working Parties (i.e., Technology Transfer 6.06.02, and Extension 6.06.03), FAO, and IUFRO-SPDC, an application for a parallel session on "Strengthening collective innovation capacity of forest stakeholders in research and development" could be successfully concluded. This two-hour session will include invited and voluntary papers as well as posters and a panel discussion.

New type of IUFRO News

Finally, I would like to draw the attention of our readers to **a new type of the IUFRO News** that will be distributed on a monthly basis exclusively via e-mail **starting from Jan. 2005.** Reporting on IUFRO-SPDC events and activities will remain

an integral part of the new electronic newsletter. For those institutions in developing countries with limited facilities, IUFRO-SPDC will arrange for the production and distribution of printouts.

*Michael Kleine
Coordinator of IUFRO-SPDC*

IUFRO-SPDC at the IUFRO World Congress 2005

IUFRO-SPDC is pleased to offer the following Pre-Congress Training Courses:

**The Role of Scientists in National Forest Programmes
- Linking Research and Science with Practice**

Public Relation Extension and Communication in Forest Science

Use of Information and Communication Technology Tools in Forest Research

Sustainable Forest Management Criteria and Indicators and Forest Certification



If you desire to participate in one of these courses please indicate this on the Expression of Interest Form when applying for Travel Support to the Congress organizers in Australia - this form is included in the Congress Information Package.

GFIS - AFRICA

EXPANDING PARTNERSHIP for GFIS in Africa

With the establishment of five regional GFIS¹ Service Centres, the GFIS Africa Project has created the foundation for the systematic mobilisation of forest-related scientific information in Africa. Over the past 4½ years and with generous support by the European Commission, these five centres, one each located in Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal and Zimbabwe, have built the necessary capacities and the institutional network for further expanding the GFIS system to other African countries. In recent months efforts to increase awareness and encourage broader participation in GFIS, particularly mobilise more metadata have been stepped up. In-country workshops, one in Nigeria and one in Tanzania, were organised by the Coastal West Africa GFIS Service Centre (located at the Forest Research Institute of Ghana in Kumasi) and the East Africa GFIS Service Centres (located at the Kenya Forestry Research Institute, Nairobi).

In Nigeria, the workshop attracted sixteen participants representing seven forestry organisations, while in Tanzania ten persons representing four organisations joined the event. In both countries key forestry institutions such as the national research institutes, forestry faculties of the university, the forestry departments and some environmental NGOs were among the participating organisations.

The objectives of the workshops were:

- To present an overview of the GFIS Project, GFIS principles and benefits
- To demonstrate the GFIS website (<http://www.gfis.net>) and use of the search facilities
- To elaborate on the GFIS metadata elements and data entry protocol, *and*
- To conduct hands-on exercises in the use of GFIS.

All in all, there has been an excellent response by the participants about joining GFIS and using its facilities. As most forest-related information resources about these two countries are available in the forestry research institutes, universities and forestry departments they are the key players to act as information providers at the national level in close cooperation with the respective GFIS Service Centre.

Interactions with potential national and local information providers in both countries also revealed a number of constraints that need to be addressed in future efforts to strengthen GFIS in Africa. The following constraints have been identified and recommendations made to overcome them:

- Some institutions lack computers and internet access. Although GFIS does not have the resources to invest in large-scale upgrading schemes, partnership with more resourceful institutions may initially mitigate the lack of available infrastructure.

- As the number of potential information providers is much larger than could be convened in the workshops, further familiarisation and mobilisation campaigns in each country are needed. It would be most appropriate if the national forest research organisations would take the lead in this endeavour.

- In order to ensure that only relevant information is provided to GFIS, the national forest research organisations should support the regional service centres in the selection of new information providers and quality control of incoming reference material.

- Considerable efforts in future need to be directed towards training of staff members of information providing institutions in resource discovery and metadata formulation. In addition, potential users of GFIS such as scientists dealing with forest-and tree-related research, policy makers, forest managers and other interested forest stakeholders should be introduced to the various GFIS applications.

¹ The Global Forest Information Service (GFIS) is an internet-based system that aims at enhancing access to forest-related information from around the world. A search facility (<http://www.gfis.net>) has been developed on the internet that allows users to locate a wide array of different types of information resources such as reports, journal articles, maps, websites, and databases. Currently GFIS contains about 130,000 references contributed by 60 information providers. The database is continuously being expanded.

This article is based on the following two workshop reports:

Cobbinah, J., M. Sraku-Lartey and S. Britwum (Costal West Africa GFIS Service Centre). Report on the GFIS

Nigeria In-Country Training Workshop, Forestry Research Institute, Ibadan, Nigeria

Chikamai, B. and S. Mbiru (Eastern Africa GFIS Service Centre). Report

on a Training Workshop on the Global Forest Information Service (GFIS) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

*Compiled by Michael Kleine
IUFRO-SPDC Coordinator*



Research Proposal Writing Course in Sabah, Malaysia

In the East-Malaysian State of Sabah research activities in forestry are – to a large extent – conducted by scientists from the Sabah Forestry Department’s Forest Research Centre (FRC) while forest education is the responsibility of the School of International Tropical Forestry (SITF) at the University Malaysia Sabah. Because forestry research and education in Sabah could not fully benefit from available national and international research funding, the Malaysian-German Forestry Education Project (MGFEP), a collaborative effort between SITF and the German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ), organised a training course for young research scientists in preparing and

writing research proposals. The course took place at the Campus of the University Malaysia Sabah in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, from 20-22 May, 2004. Seventeen lecturers of SITF and nine scientists from FRC participated in the 3-day course.

Dr. Michael Kleine, Coordinator of IUFRO-SPDC, Vienna, Austria, and Dr. Chan Hung Tuck, Director of Research Management, FRIM, Kepong, Malaysia, acted as workshop trainers and lecturers while Dr. Walter Kollert, Chief Technical Advisor of MGFEP and Prof. Aminuddin Mohamad, Dean of SITF, provided logistics and technical assistance.

The course contents is based on IUFRO-SPDC’s training module on research proposal writing as well as input by FRIM on the Eighth Malaysia Plan IRPA Programme. During the first general day the participants were introduced to topics such as identifying and prioritising research needs, identifying sources for research funding and introduction to the research proposal process. The latter involves pre-planning and rules for writing the proposal including summary, problem statement, project description, budget and various appendices. On the second day, the Malaysian scheme for research funding was introduced providing an overview of the IRPA Programme (budget allo-

cations, categories of funding, eligibility criteria, conditions of approval etc.). In the afternoon session the formal requirements of submitting a good research proposal were discussed. With the help of examples, important sections of a proposal such as objectives and justification, benefits of the project, project structure, research approach and milestones were presented. During the final day, specific tips on writing techniques, the post-proposal writing processes and group research were discussed. In addition, examples of funding applications to different international organisations including references to websites for funding sources were presented.

At the end of the course the participants were asked to express their opinion about the course. In general, they considered the course as most useful and

expressed the view that it served their needs very well. About 96% of the participants rated the usefulness of the course content and adequacy and relevance of the input provided by the resource persons either as excellent or as good. In a final wrap-up session participants and resource persons discussed future capacity development activities:

- Identification of priority areas for research. It is recommended to identify research priorities through a dialogue between various forest stakeholders in Sabah. UMS together with the Sabah Forestry Department (FRC) could establish a discussion platform with stakeholders and organise a sequence of round table talks. Researchers would learn more about the immediate needs of practitioners and could translate these needs into researchable questions.

This would then provide the input for the identification of priority research areas.

- Further on-the-job training in actual writing of research proposals would be required (working on ones own proposal).

- In order to increase awareness of the importance of proposal writing skills, managers and senior officers should also be exposed to the proposal writing issue.

From IUFRO-SPDC's point of view, this undertaking has been very successful as it brought together international and local expertise through partnership of IUFRO, the Forest Research Institute Malaysia, the University Malaysia Sabah and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ).

*Michael Kleine
IUFRO-SPDC Coordinator*





FORNESSA at UNFF4 and its Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue

by
Dr. Atse M. Yapi
IUFRO-SPDC Regional Coordinator for Africa
and FORNESSA Secretary

Introduction

The fourth session of the **United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)** took place from 3 to 14 May 2004 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Forum brought together over 600 delegates from governments, intergovernmental organizations, and major groups. During its fourth session, the UNFF also held an interactive Multi-stakeholder Dialogue (MSD) among the major groups, government delegations and member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. Both the Forum and the Dialogue focused mainly on (i) Traditional Forest-Related Knowledge, (ii) Social and Cultural Aspects of Forests, (iii) Forest-Related Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting, (iv) Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, and (v) Forest-Related Scientific Knowledge, and led to policy resolutions on the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action relating to the above topics. The Forum also organized three panel discussions: one on the role of forests in achieving broader development goals; and two with a regional focus on Africa and Small Island Developing States.

The **Forestry Research Network for Sub-Saharan Africa (FORNESSA)** participated actively in discussions during these sessions, particularly in the preparation and holding of the MSD, which was held in two parts: (i) a general policy discussion on Social and Cultural Aspects of Forests and Traditional Forest Related Knowledge, and (ii) an implementation-focused exchange on Capacity Building and Partnerships. This present report is a brief summary and evaluation of FORNESSA's participation, with a view to highlighting the benefits to sub-regional forest research networks in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Rationale for FORNESSA's participation

It's the goal of FORNESSA to strengthen forestry research for greater impact on management and conservation of forest and tree resources for sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa. Towards this end, FORNESSA pursues the following three main objectives:

- (i) support to sub-regional networks in strengthening the capacity of their forest research institutions;
- (ii) fostering regional co-operation in forest research in sub-Saharan Africa; and

(iii) articulating and advocating African forest research agenda and development issues in global fora.

With the aim to further FORNESSA's goal and visibility in international forestry processes and to advocate the use of science in the formulation and implementation of forest-related policies, the FORNESSA Secretariat has accepted the invitation of the UNFF Secretariat to contribute a discussion paper on the topics of the fourth session of the UNFF and to participate in the Forum, as a representative of the Scientific and Technological Community major group. With the assistance of the IUFRO Headquarters, and contribu-

tions from FORNESSA members and sub-regional networks, the FORNESSA Secretariat developed the discussion paper and was represented at the Forum by Dr. Joseph Cobbinah (Director of the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana) and Dr. Atse M. Yapi (IUFRO-SPDC Regional Coordinator for Africa and FORNESSA Secretary).

Policy Resolutions of the Forum on Issues of Interest to FORNESSA

One of the main tasks of the Forum was to review progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to the major themes for the

fourth session of UNFF. The deliberations of these issues resulted in the adoption of five resolutions. The MSD that was convened as an integral part of the UNFF session provided stakeholder input to these deliberations. In addition, the panel discussion focusing on Africa made a number of important recommendations towards sustainable forest management in Africa. For lack of space, only the resolution on the "Forest-Related Scientific Knowledge", and the panel recommendations for sustainable forest management in Africa, can be presented here - please see the text boxes 1 and 2 on pages 20 and 21. All other resolutions and results of the 4th session of UNFF can be found on the website of the UNFF at <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/>.

FORNESSA's Role at UNFF 5

FORNESSA was honored and pleased to be offered this unique opportunity to advance its role and visibility in international processes and to promote the use of science in the formulation of forest-related policies and the implementation of forest-related proposals for action. FORNESSA is especially pleased that the FORNESSA Secretariat is nominated as the Focal Point for the Scientific and Technological

Community (S&T) in the Multi Stakeholder Dialogue at UNFF-5.

FORNESSA follows IUFRO in its role as the S&T Focal Point - IUFRO acted as S&T Focal Point in 2003 and coordinated the preparation of the S&T discussion paper for the 3rd session of UNFF in 2003, but could no longer serve as a Focal Point since IUFRO became a member of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF).

The Scientific and Technological Community major group is one of the nine major groups that are invited to participate in the UNFF sessions and to contribute to the MSD process. The task of a major group Focal Point is to coordinate the input of its major group to the MSD. In more practical terms, the FORNESSA Secretariat, as the Focal Point of the S&T major group, has the main responsibility for drawing up a major group discussion paper addressing the topics of the fifth session of the UNFF to be held in May 2005. The task of preparing the discussion paper requires communication both within the S&T major group and with the UNFF Secretariat and the focal points of other major groups.

The UNFF Secretariat informed that intensive preparation for the fifth

session of the UNFF has started. As part of the UNFF review process, countries and major groups will be asked to submit baseline information regarding the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action to date. They will also be requested to complete questionnaires relating to the 21 specific criteria of the review as delineated in UNFF2. Such a questionnaire and request for submissions will be distributed by the Secretariat in mid-July. Focal Points are encouraged to share this request with organizations in their networks and submit inputs, as they deem appropriate and possible given resource constraints.

FORNESSA therefore urges its members and sub-regional networks to remain available and participate actively in future UNFF and UNFF-related processes such as MSD. The FORNESSA Secretariat in collaboration and consultation with its sub-regional networks and major international partners (e.g., APAFRI, EFRN, IUFRO) is looking forward to the challenging task to represent the S&T community at the next UNFF session in 2005.

Atse M. Yapi
IUFRO-SPDC Regional
Coordinator for Africa

Box 1: Resolution of the Forum on Forest-Related Scientific Knowledge (Resolution 4/1)
Brought to the Attention of the Economic and Social Council



The United Nations Forum on Forests,

Taking note of the views exchanged by countries as well as major groups at its fourth session on the status of countries' efforts to implement the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) proposals for action related to forest-related scientific knowledge, which identified progress, obstacles and lessons learned.

Highlighting the following lessons learned through the exchange of country experiences:

- (a) Science has significantly enhanced knowledge about issues addressed in the IPF/IFF proposals for action.
- (b) In spite of progress made, experience shows that exchange and dissemination of forest-related scientific knowledge and strengthening the interaction between science and policy can increase the use of forest-related scientific knowledge in decision-making;
- (c) Experience has also shown that the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of forest-related scientific research can enhance the relevance and extension of research to the stakeholders.
- (d) Public funding for forest research has been on the decline and this has limited the contribution of forest science to the advancement of sustainable forest management, especially in developing countries.
- (e) The strengthening of regional forest research networks has enhanced capacity building, cooperation and the promotion of regional research priorities.

Box 1 - Resolution 4/1 - continued

- (1) *Encourages* countries to highlight the essential role of science and research in sustainable forest management, and incorporate as appropriate, research strategies and programmes into national forest programmes, or equivalent programmes ;
- (2) *Encourages* countries, within their capacities, to strengthen linkages between science and policy by enhancing the capacities of research organizations, institutions as well as scientists, in particular in developing countries;
- (3) *Requests* the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to facilitate joint actions to further improve linkages and to improve communication and networking between science, forest policy and civil society;
- (4) *Calls upon* the donor community, international organizations and financial institutions to enhance the capacity of research organizations in developing countries in generating and accessing forest-related data and information including through information and communication technologies infrastructure, strengthening the skills of researchers, and supporting networking activities;
- (5) *Encourages* countries and regional organizations and processes to support regional and sub-regional forest research networks with the objective of capacity-building, research cooperation, and promotion of regional research priorities;
- (6) *Encourages* international and regional organizations, institutions, and processes, with the involvement of various stakeholders, to promote and support integrated and interdisciplinary research on forest-related issues of importance at national and global levels both within and between national and international research organizations and institutions to enhance SFM and promote conservation and sustainable use of forest resources;
- (7) *Encourages* CPF members, countries, international organizations and financial institutions to support initiatives promoting the integration of scientific research and national forest programmes, policies or strategies, noting the strengths of many CPF members involved in scientific research, and existing programmes, inter alia, in IUFRO, FAO, CIFOR and ICRAF;
- (8) *Invites* countries and the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to support short- and medium-term exchanges of scientists between developed and developing countries in the context of sustainable forest management-related research;
- (9) *Encourages* countries to promote partnerships and participation of relevant stakeholders in the formulation of research programmes at the national and local levels;
- (10) *Encourages* research organizations to provide for the timely and effective communication of the outcomes of forest-related scientific research;
- (11) *Calls upon* donors and the international community to support developing countries with financial and technical support and capacity building for forest-related scientific research within the priorities identified by developing countries in their national forest programmes, or equivalent programmes;
- (12) *Encourages* countries to promote the role of private sector investment in scientific research related to sustainable forest management, consistent with countries' international obligations;
- (13) *Encourages* countries to promote forest-related scientific research that is based on the needs and priorities of its users; In this context *invites* countries to consider the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including indigenous and local communities, in forest-related research;
- (14) *Encourages* donors to facilitate the availability of forest-related scientific research results to developing countries in an effective manner;
- (15) *Urges* countries, within their capacities, to recognize the importance of forestry education and research for achieving sustainable forest management, and calls upon countries, within their capacities, to enhance forestry education and research capacity;
- (16) *Encourages* the CPF to the extent possible within its mandate to provide information, as requested, on scientific, technical and technological aspects of SFM.

Box 2: Recommendations for Sustainable Forest Management in Africa

The Panel Discussion focusing on Africa made a number of policy recommendations for sustainable forest management, including the following:



- (1) Improving the scientific knowledge with regards to African forests and management practices.
- (2) The integration, formalization, utilisation and protection of indigenous knowledge.
- (3) Improved local level participation and involvement in decision making and project implementation, in particular by women.
- (4) The adoption of a rights-based approach to sustainable forest management and the devolution of benefits to those managing forests.
- (5) Focused efforts to incorporate forests in national development and poverty reduction strategies and on developing and implementing national forest programmes in African countries.
- (6) Development of forest product industry and trade as well as improving market access for African forest products and capacity building.
- (7) Strengthening financing of regional and especially sub-regional cooperation in sustainable forest management.