



UN-REDD
PROGRAMME

National Forest Monitoring System Training Modules



Forest Inventories

*Module 1: National forest
assessment and
policy linkages*

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Content

This session covers the background and objectives of National Forest Inventories (NFIs), and their relation to national policies.



Introduction

A **National Forest Inventory (NFI)** provides information on forests and trees outside forests and their condition, value and uses.



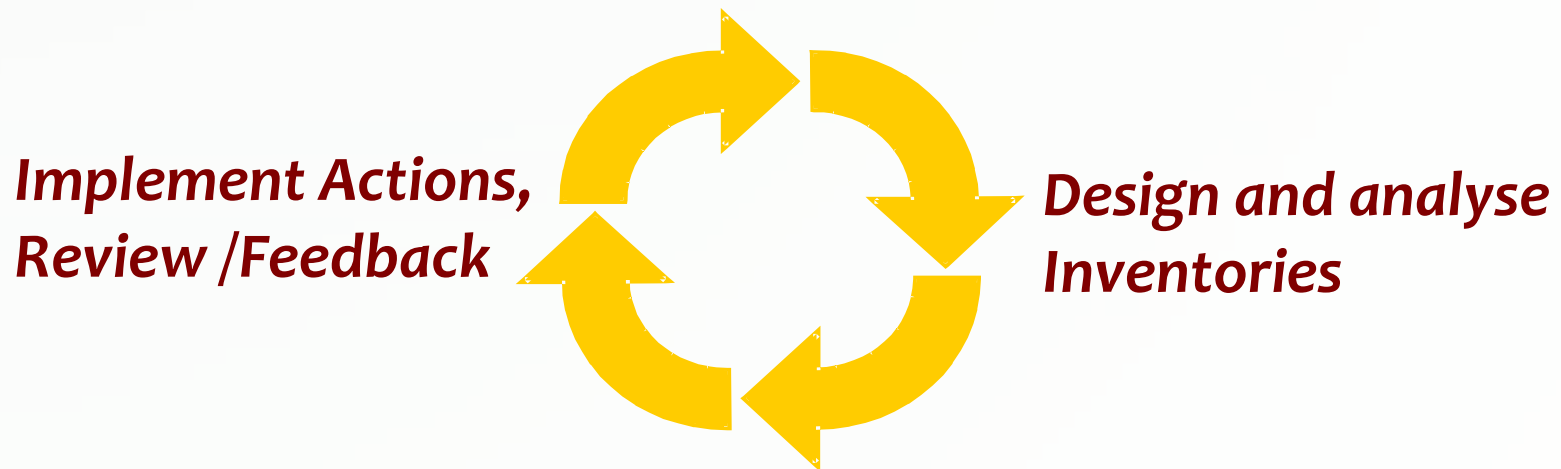
It refers to a comprehensive process that moves from identifying **information needs** through data collection and analysis to **informed decision-making**.

Introduction

An NFI is, and should be, a **strategic tool**.

The information collected with an NFI is used mainly for the **development, implementation and monitoring of national forest policies** and forestry sector strategies.

What are your Information needs?



Policy development / Planning

NFI's and Policy

NFI – *information supply*



Decision-making and policy –
information demand



**NFIs inform and can monitor decision-making.
Policy forms the demand for and use of an NFI.
They have a feedback relationship.**

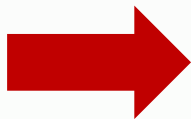
Problems arise when the information is poorly linked to policy e.g.

- If the needs were not well identified or
- the information does not match needs,
- the information is not available or understood by the users (e.g. decision makers, forest managers, companies, farmers, public etc)
- or is not acted on.

Introduction

The reality:

- Many countries still exhibit serious **shortcomings in the supply and use of information required for forestry policy-making**
- Often there is a **failure to link the supply of information** (the producer) **to demand** (the user)
- Collected **data** remains far too often **under-used** or **poorly used**
- Some donor-driven inventories **don't** undertake analyses of **actual needs**.



Demand for forest information is also changing

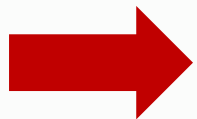
→ toward **multipurpose NFIs**

Introduction

The gap between supply and demand of information cannot be solved by improving the supply side alone (e.g. by introducing or improving national forest inventories);

it is also the result of issues on the demand (users) side.

It is important to **improve policy process**, including **administrative environments that affect the production, flow and communication of information.**



Stakeholder involvement at all levels:

Involving **producers and users** of data in this process is crucial.

Introduction



In this Module:

Why is knowledge about forest resources still poor?

Why are inventories needed?

What kind of information is needed?

How can the links between information provision and policy-making be improved.

2. Why is the knowledge about forest resources still poor?

- Developing policy-relevant questions is often poorly done
- The information presented is supply-driven (by foresters), without proper analysis of the questions that users need answering
 - provides answers to irrelevant questions
- Inventories are carried out under pressure from donors
 - tend to be one-time undertakings, with no real connection with what the country wants and needs to know
- Lack of resources due to low commitment and unclear what is needed
- Information may be kept secret or in closed government files
 - Hide real figures to avoid criticism (e.g. high deforestation).
Or to hide failures,
or to protect personal or small group's interests.

2. Why is the knowledge about forest resources still poor?

- Information may be present but fails to answer key questions
- Information exists but is spread across many institutions
 - (e.g. coast, land boundaries in Lands Dept., forest types/areas in forestry Dept)
- Collected information has been lost or become inaccessible due to lack of staff continuity / knowledge or good storage
 - *where is the information from the past NFI, who has it?*
- Planners and policy-makers have difficulties in finding and understanding available information

Why is information needed?

The need for information is mainly to develop forest-related policies and strategies, implement forest management actions and monitor them.

Additionally, NFI data can enable the fulfilment of **international commitments**, such as reporting to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) or the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD).

Why is information needed?

An NFI allows a country to estimate man-made GHG emissions and removals associated with forests because it includes field measurements that allow the estimation of forest carbon stocks (and changes if measured more than once or models are used)

NFI & the policy process

Information should inform national policy.
Information is most meaningful if a functioning policy process operates
Forest policies must be integrated with national objectives and policies



The policy process

The policy process should precede information acquisition and should include the following steps:



- Public debate

- Identify problems and potentials

- Design options for action

- Analyze the consequences of action

- Decision-making (select the option)

- Implementation

- Monitoring

What information is needed?

Data collection should be **demand driven**
Should result from a political commitment
and connected to a policy



- Public debate
- Identify problems and potentials

NFI decisions should be guided by
what the information is **required for**;
e.g. achieving national objectives or
reporting to international conventions,
often relevant beyond the forestry
sector too.



Types of information commonly needed

Land use – possible conflict: wood vs. agricultural production.

Forest use - quantities, patterns and trends in the production and consumption of forest products. (including non-wood commodities and services derived from forests).

The present state of the forests - basic information: areas, topography, ownership, accessibility, volumes and growth.

Change - only repeated or “continuous” inventories can provide such information.

Plantations - purpose, planted area by year, ownership and tenure arrangements, etc.

Trees outside of forests – in many countries the majority of forest products originate from this resource.



Types of information commonly needed

Forests supplying local communities - socio-economic needs often not well considered

- → development of policies to strengthen the beneficial roles of forests for rural communities and enable these communities to participate in sustainable forest management is often challenging

Other issues: e.g. biological diversity, forest fires, non-wood forest products, environmental benefit etc.

Carbon - increased attention to carbon (REDD+ or payment for environmental services)

- Carbon storage role is sometimes mis-represented as the most important forest function

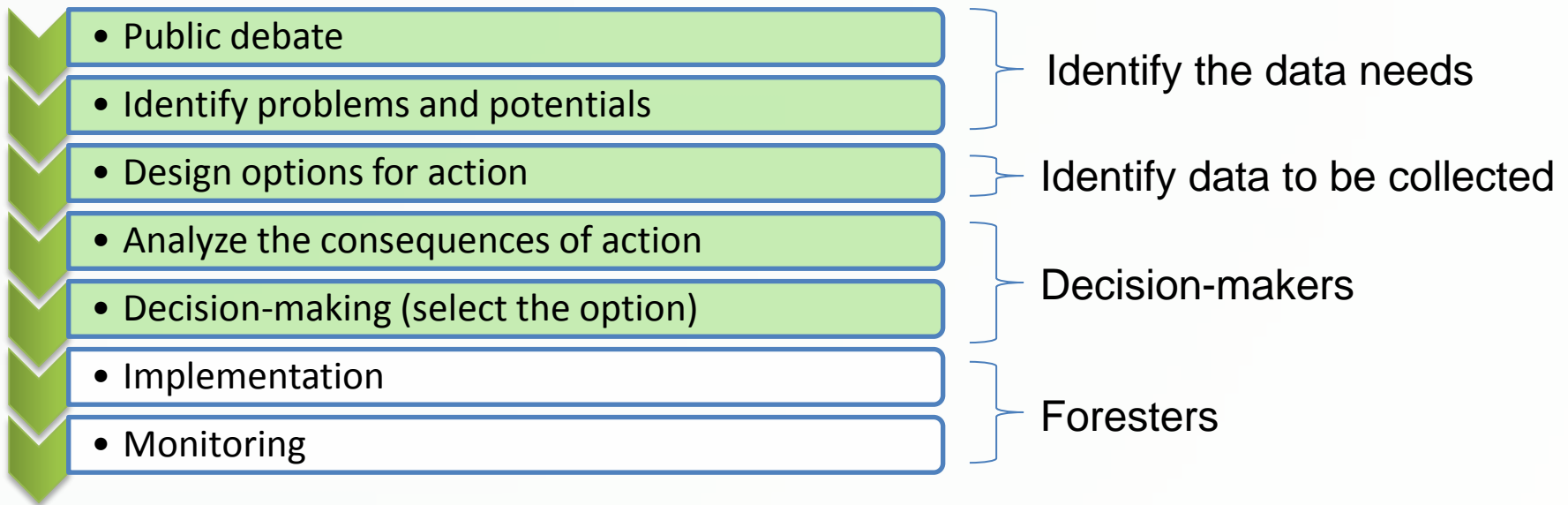


Considerations before collecting information

- What information is already available, is it accessible and does it answer the questions?
- What systems are in place for organizing, storing and retrieving the data?
- What available resources are there to do further work?
 - One-time or continuous inventories?
 - Local project or large-scale, national?
 - Field measurements and/or remote-sensing?
 - Information on forest resources or on economic/social/administrative topics?



Policy process



What follows decision-making about the objectives and design of the NFI:
Implementation and Monitoring

Implementation and Monitoring

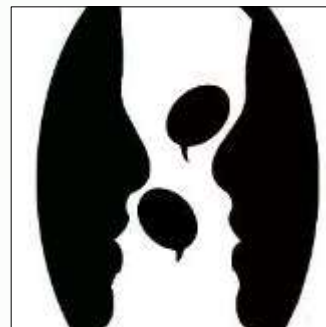
Common steps towards **implementation** of an NFI:

Legislation of
new policies



Revision of organizational
and administrative
structures

Financial
arrangements;
funding, fees



Communication

Once implemented, the impacts must be **monitored** to gauge success.

Conclusions

- Forest policies should be **integrated** with other **national policies**
- **A forest policy guides how forests should be used and managed**
- The process must **include consultation with, and the needs of stakeholders** to be accepted and smooth implementation
- **Good policies and management depend on information** about the status and use of forests, changes, plantations, trees outside of forests, non-wood forest products and role of forests for local communities (not only trees)
- NFI's should meet the people and management needs set out in the Policy
- Implementation of **forest policies and NFI's** must be followed by **monitoring and feedback**
- Adjust the policy if the NFI data indicates problems (e.g. unsustainable)
- Give attention to **new requirements and adjust the NFI data if needed**

