



UNFF Side Event

Evidence-Based Forestry, hosted by CIFOR

Programme

1. Introduction to EBF Initiative	Dr. Peter Holmgren, Director General CIFOR	(10 min)
2. Collaboration, science and IUFRO	Professor Niels Elers Koch, President IUFRO	(10 min)
3. Overview of evidence-based decision-making	Dr. Gillian Petrokofsky, University of Oxford	(10 min)
4. Interactive session to scope policy questions	Working in small groups	(30 min)
5. Plenary discussion of selected questions from groups	Plenary discussion	(40 min)
6. Closing remarks	Dr. Peter Holmgren	(5 min)

Background

CIFOR has made a strategic decision to engage with partners in a collaborative initiative that will promote a robust approach to 'evidence-based forestry'. CATIE, CIRAD, ICRAF and IUFRO have joined CIFOR as founding partners. The initiative is broad and incorporates traditional and new visions of *forestry* within landscapes and society, including (but not limited to) the relationships between forests and poverty reduction, food security, health, green growth and climate change. Definitions of 'evidence' that are useful for policy are similarly broad and often contested: the aim of this initiative is to concentrate on *science* as an important source of evidence, while recognising other valid sources of evidence. Partnership and collaboration are key to the success of this initiative; this session introduces the concept of evidence-based decision making and invites ideas and inputs from participants.

Evidence-based decision-making

Other sectors have well-established procedures for using systematic, evidence-based approaches to science-policy dialogue and action. The current initiative aims to draw on their experiences and expertise to scope the potential for establishing a similar 'collaboration without walls' to contribute to the process of determining the priority questions in our sector, and working together to evaluate the science base that needs to be drawn upon to further understanding.

Systematic reviews of science

Systematic reviews are powerful tools to aid good decision-making. While high quality reviews of science in many fields of forestry have always been published, policy-makers are increasingly calling for the sorts of systematic reviews of literature that have been used in medicine for over 20 years; these are largely unknown in forestry. The current initiative will prepare a series of systematic reviews to support high priority policy questions.

What are the priority questions?

Procedures for engaging in a 'bottom-up' approach to the challenge of prioritising policy-relevant questions for research have been used successfully in other fields. They have the potential to be extended to include a wide range of international participants with a stake in developing a global set of policy and research priorities that link directly with the production of systematic reviews within the evidence-based forestry initiative. This session invites ideas for questions from participants who may not normally contribute to research agenda-setting, but whose views are of great value in shaping policy development.

How the session will work

We invite participants to take a few minutes to review this short document and to form small, informal groups to discuss what you think are high-priority questions that are of policy relevance and would benefit from a robust analysis of the relevant science. Please complete the second page of this document individually and agree amongst your groups on a single question that could be presented from the platform for general discussion. We will invite a few questions to be presented, but we will collect all individual responses to provide a rich source of information from this meeting to inform and shape future discussions. Your continuing participation is welcome – provide contact details and we will keep you informed. We are building a 'collaboration without walls' in the spirit of the evidence-based Collaborations established in other disciplines.

Participatory session

Policy questions for which science is an important source of evidence

The following points should guide, but not constrain, your thinking about potential review topics that you consider to have high priority internationally:

- Topics for which there is large amount of research on a topic but where key questions remain unanswered;
- Questions where there is uncertainty about the effectiveness of a policy
- Topics which are at an early stage of policy development
- Questions that need a general survey of evidence – that may identify research gaps
- Topics which assess the effectiveness of methodologies - scoping potential for new method development

Please provide as much information as you can for the following elements. Your ideas are more important than the elegance of the writing – feel free to write notes or even bullet points

1. **Tentative Review title** - indicate the topic and scope

2. **Background** - describe the problem you seek to address, and its context in terms of global interest and its relevance to international policy and practice.

3. **Current research & policy landscape** - indicate the main strands of current thinking in this area

4. **Any other comments** – if you and/or your organisation may have an interest in working with this initiative, please provide contact details and brief notes of your particular area(s) of interest