

An information service to support global forest policy

Kapos, V., Iremonger, S., Luxmoore, R., Reynolds, J. & Smith, G.

World Conservation Monitoring Centre, 219 Huntingdon Road,
Cambridge CB3 0DL, U.K., val.kapos@wcmc.org.uk

Abstract

There is increasing global consensus that forest management must take into account the multiple values and benefits derived from forest resources, not simply timber and other wood products. Access to improved information on forests is key to making this possible. Indeed, the conclusions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests recommended "...the development of improved forest information systems with a view to enhancing co-ordination and data sharing...".

In response, the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, one of the principal sources of global information about forests in the conservation context, has initiated development of a Global Forest Information Service (GFIS). GFIS is designed as a consortium fostering collaboration and links among many diverse data providers to deliver the full range of forest-related information most useful to decision-makers through a single entry point, both on the internet and in other forms. A conceptual framework has been constructed to highlight the essential issues common to all types of forest-related decisions (resources and services, management, and pressures or demands), and a full range of information on these issues from many sources will be made available through this single unifying structure. The service will continue to evolve as a result of the diverse collaboration and input anticipated. As part of the development process, WCMC has proactively sought feedback from potential users of GFIS on the suitability of a prototype model for meeting their needs. The results have suggested that the framework is a useful one, not only for delivering forest information at regional and global scales, but also as a model for the development of national forest information services. The presentation will introduce the conceptual framework and prototype Global Forest Information Service, and include an analysis of who will be the principal users of global forest information on the Web and what their needs will be.