



# **THE PLANNING PROCESS: An Overview of Conventions, Policies, Guidelines, Instruments and Goals On Which Forest Planning Is Based**

**Labode POPOOLA, *PhD, FFAN***

**Professor of Forest Economics & Sustainable Development at the  
University of Ibadan**

**Director, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Nigeria.**





# Overview of Forest Planning

- Forest planning is a systematic process of managing forests by evaluating their resources, setting objectives, and implementing strategies.
- It involves the identification of current conditions in a forest ecosystem, addressing potential threats, and developing measures to conserve its natural values.
- Forest planning aims to achieve various management objectives such as providing social, economic, and ecological benefits to society while promoting sustainable practices.





# Importance of Forest Planning

- Forest management planning is important for many reasons. For example, it can:
  - ✓ help forest owners and managers identify what they want from the forest and provide an efficient course of action to meet those objectives;
  - ✓ provide a means by which stakeholders can participate in forest management and ensure clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders;
  - ✓ ensure the existence and functionality of the resource, while also increasing its value (e.g. specifying where, how and under what conditions and constraints the resource may be used);





# Importance of Forest Planning

- ✓ Optimal use of time and costs (e.g. in road construction and routing, wood harvesting, gantry preparation etc);
- ✓ reduce risks and their impacts and avoid potentially costly forest management mistakes (e.g. harvesting the wrong trees or at the wrong time, failing to implement fire management regimes, or neglecting insect and disease infestations);
- ✓ provide continuity in managerial operations over time by formalizing administrative arrangements and establishing a basis for monitoring forest activities;
- ✓ project future harvesting volumes and possible earnings;





# Importance of Forest Planning

- ✓ assist in the efficient collection of information and the organization of business records.
- ✓ help to elicit market information (demand trends, prices, competition and threats)
- ✓ Sustainability





# Forest Planning Process

- The forest planning process often involves the following steps:
- ✓ preliminary assessment (e.g. on legal, biophysical, socioeconomic and market aspects);
- ✓ forest resources assessment (e.g. a forest inventory, including species diversity, genetic resource diversity and other metrics);
- ✓ participation and consultation with stakeholders;
- ✓ setting the management objectives;
- ✓ zoning or stratifying the forest area ( into coupes, compartments etc);
- ✓ calculating sustainable yields (from wood and non-wood products);





# Forest Planning Process

- ✓ developing the content of the forest management plan according to the format(s) provided by the regulatory agencies, if any;
- ✓ approval of the forest management plan by the forest authority (prior to implementation); and
- ✓ periodic revision of the plan based on monitoring and evaluation outcomes





# Understanding Conventions, Policies, and Guidelines in Forest Planning

- Conventions, policies, and guidelines play significant roles in the planning and management of forests.
- They provide a frameworks that ensure consistency in forest planning and management regimes.
- These tools help to set standards and provide guidance and direction towards achieving goals and objectives of forest planning and management.
- Conventions, policies, and guidelines in forest planning encompass international agreements, legislative acts, administrative rules, and other frameworks that set guidelines for sustainable forest planning and management.







# Understanding Conventions, Policies, and Guidelines...

- In most countries, forest planning is guided by international conventions, agreements and initiatives that shape national forest programmes, especially beginning in the late 1980s and in the 1990s (FAO, 2003, 2006; Mayers, 2003).
- In most countries, technical guidance and financial support for forest planning was initially obtained from FAO and other development partners. Further, the national forest programmes contributed to revision of forest legislations in most cases to support Participatory Forest Management (PFM) (Wily, 2002)
- More recently, especially between the 2000s and 2010s, forest programmes based on the use of carbon trade to finance forest conservation came into play (UN-REDD, 2020).
- See **Figure 1**.





# Figure 1

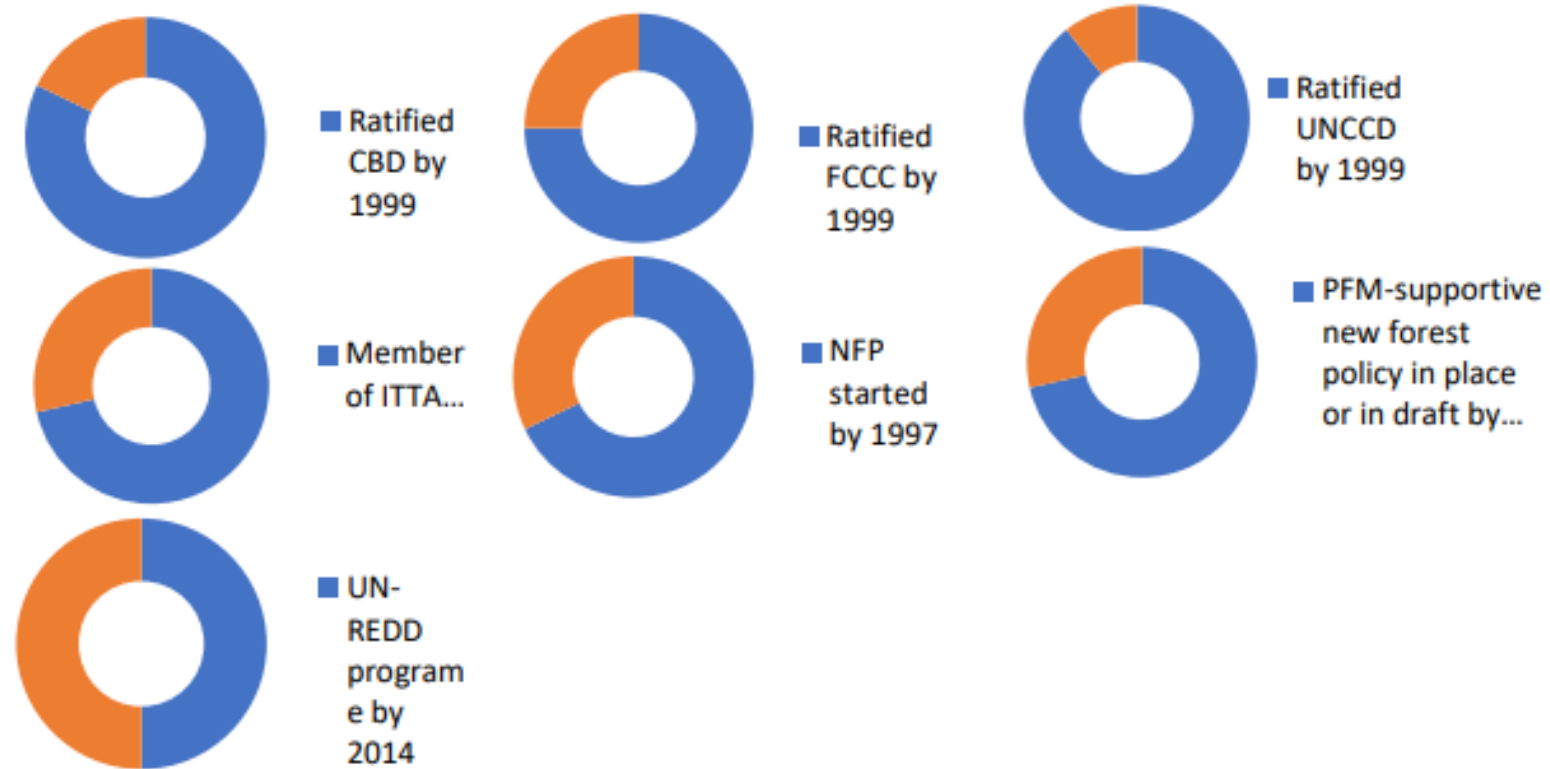


Figure 1. Some of the conventions, policies and guidelines on which forest planning is based in selected African countries. Source: prepared using data from (FAO, 1999b), (UN-REDD, 2020), (Wily, 2002). CBD= Convention on Biological Diversity. FCCC= Framework Convention on Climate Change. UNCCD= United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. PFM=Participatory Forest Management. ITTA = International Tropical Timber Association. NFP = National Forest Programme. UN-REDD = United Nations Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation.





## Tools and Resources for Effective Forest Planning

- Instruments, research, education, and stakeholder participation are essential tools and resources for effective forest planning.
- Various organizations and initiatives exist to promote and facilitate the adoption of these tools, including the United Nations, Forest Stewardship Council, and the Forest Landowners Association.
- In some countries, there are NGOs that advocate sustainable forest management (Nigerian Conservation Foundation in Nigeria, Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth/Nigeria, African Wildlife Foundation, Kenya, Green Peace Africa, South Africa, Tanzania Forest Conservation Group etc)
- Stakeholders involved in forest planning are central government institutions, local communities, NGOs, PSOs, and the international community.





# Importance of Instruments in Forest Planning

- Instruments are fundamental elements in forest planning.
- They are the practical tools that facilitate the integration of forest management objectives and strategies.
- Some of the essential instruments in forest planning include forest inventory, land use planning, impact assessments (EIA, SIA...), monitoring systems, and sustainability assessments.
- These instruments help in assessing current and future forest conditions to develop sets of management strategies that enhance sustainability and resource protection.





# Goals of Forest Planning and their Significance

- The primary goal of forest planning is to promote a balance between ecological conservation and sustainable economic development.
- There are different objectives or goals within forest planning, which include maintaining biodiversity, mitigating climate change, improving forest service functions, and enhancing socioeconomic benefits.
- Goals of forest planning are significant as they help to ensure the long-term sustainability of forest resources for various stakeholder groups, safeguarding the values that the forest provides for the environment.





# Incorporating Social, Legal & Institutional, Economic and Ecological Factors in Forest Planning

- When developing forest management plans, it is critical to consider social, legal and ecological factors that may impact the sustainable management of forests.
- Social factors (stakeholder participation, gender issues, employment issues, cultural issues and education and awareness)
- Legal and Institutional factors (forests laws and regulations, forest ownership and governance, land use, land tenure, community participation, legal frameworks, tax and subsidies, compliance, ethics and professionalism)





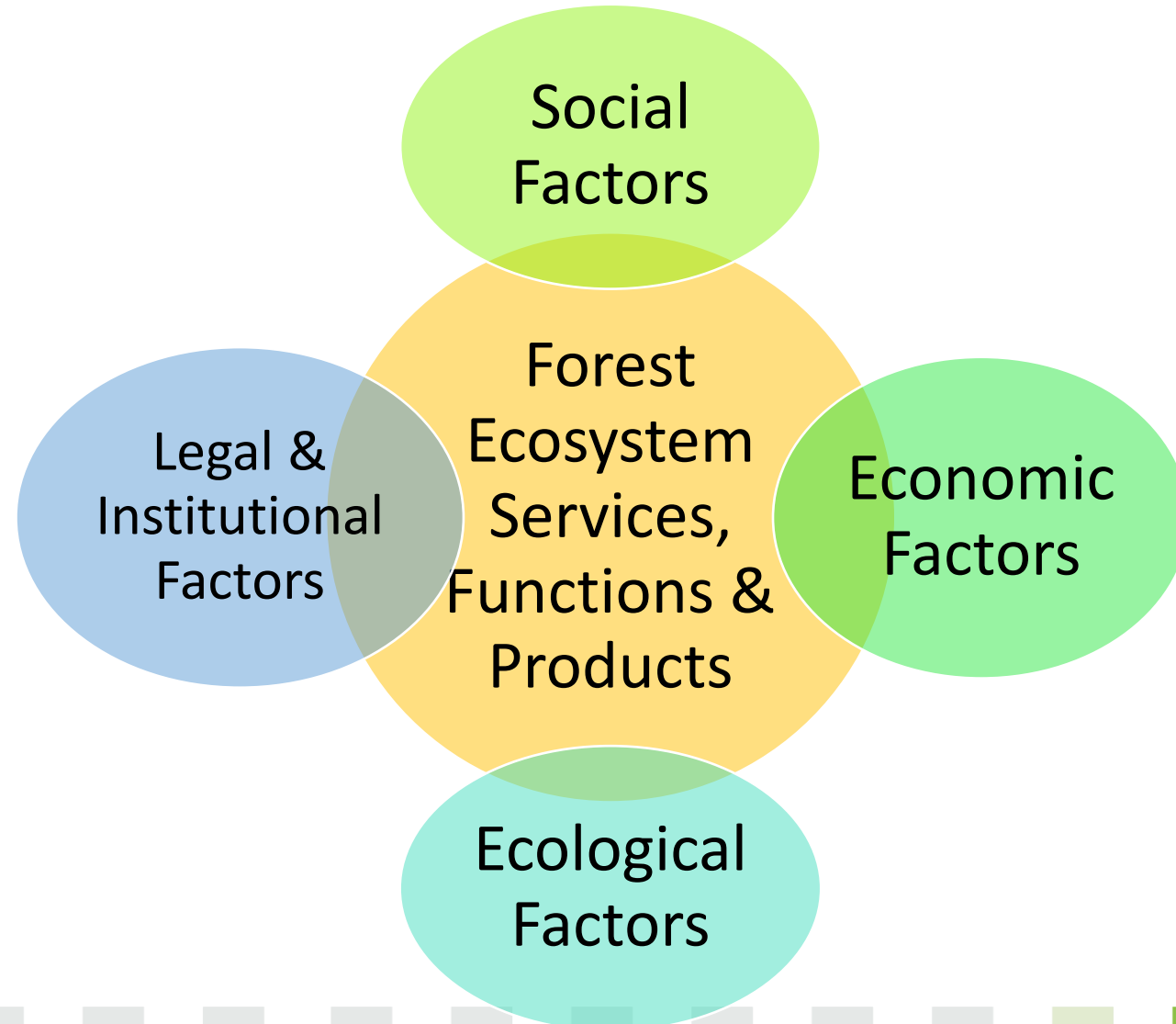
# Incorporating...Factors in Forest Planning

- Economic Factors include trade, market structure, price structure, financing, management costs, infrastructure and facilities
- Ecological factors encompass issues such as, biodiversity, edaphic conditions, water, carbon issues, climate change etc).
- These factors directly impact the forest ecosystem and its ability to provide ecosystem services and products, so it is essential to incorporate them into forest planning strategies.
- See Figure 2...





**Fig 2**







# Contemporary Approaches to Forest Planning

- Contemporary approaches to forest planning emphasize the integration of multiple objectives, including social, legal & institutional, economic, and ecological aspects.
- Also, global, regional, national and subnational Agenda are becoming increasingly valuable in forest planning
- For example, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have become a factor in all sectoral planning, and this is also applicable in the forest sector. It is important to understand the linkages and interconnectedness among forestry and the 17 Goals? (Figure 3)





# Fig 3: The SDGs at a Glance





## Contemporary Approaches ...The Global Forest Goals

- GFG1: Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change
- GFG2: Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people.
- GFG3: Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests.





## Contemporary Approaches ...The GFGs

- GFG4: Mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management and strengthen scientific and technical cooperation and partnerships.
- GFG5: Promote governance frameworks to implement sustainable forest management, including through the United Nations forest instrument, and enhance the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
  - GFG6: Enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels, including within the United Nations system and across member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as well as across sectors and relevant stakeholders





## Contemporary Approaches ...SFM Framework for Africa

- Priority 1: Enhancement of the value of forests and the sustainable production, processing, marketing and trade for forest products and ecosystem services
- Priority 2: Capacity Development and Knowledge management for SFM
- Priority 3: Political and institutional framework for Sustainable Forest Management
- Priority 4: Restoration of degraded forests and landscapes
- Priority 5: Enhanced partnerships and resource mobilization for achieving SFM
- These priorities are accompanied with clear objectives, desired outcomes, strategic interventions, indicators, who implements as well as supporting partners





# Contemporary Approaches ...

- These approaches involve a multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary, and collaborative approaches that include stakeholder consultation, adaptive management, participatory planning, and innovative technology application. Significantly, all the approaches recognize the need for partnerships
- We now live in an era of big data. How do we acquire useful and useable data to assist in planning? What technologies are available and applicable in accessing useful data that will aid our planning?
- Being up to date in our approaches to forest planning is critical, as it enables our consideration and understanding of complex issues that help to provide diverse resources to achieve sustainable forest management outcomes.







# Challenges and Opportunities in Forest Planning Implementation

- Implementing forest planning presents challenges, including insufficient resources, inadequate capacity, inadequate data and information, stakeholder conflicts, and lately insecurity, and lack of political will.
- However, effective implementation can provide vast opportunities to address sustainable development.
- The implementation of forest planning can help promote economic development, ecological conservation, and social well-being through optimized forest resource management.
- Increasingly, private participation is becoming the norm in several countries. This is likely to reduce the bureaucracy associated with forest planning and implementation.





## Case Studies: Successful Forest Planning Examples

- Numerous forest planning case studies showcase success stories in achieving sustainable forest management and meeting multifaceted objectives.
- Such examples include sustainable forest planning in Costa Rica, which has a long history of conservation efforts that have led to economic prosperity.
- Other examples of successful forest planning approaches are in the Nordic Countries (Finland, Norway, Denmark & Sweden and Germany), where collaborative, participatory and private approaches have resulted in effective forest management. The system allows for ownership change from time to time, thus encouraging more private investments in the forest sector







# Future of Forest Planning and the Need for Sustainable Practices

- The future of forest planning requires the integration of sustainable practices into forest management.
- There is a need to balance social, ecological, and economic considerations in forest planning and management to ensure long-term sustainability.
- The use of innovative technologies, the application of best practices, and the collaboration among stakeholders could provide more efficient and effective ways to achieve sustainable forest management outcomes.
- The need for sustainable practices is crucial for the survival of forests and the well-being of human society.





# Concluding Remarks

- Forest plans should be based on recent forest inventory and analysis of demand and supply of forest products and services.
- Capacity Building and Strengthening to improve knowledge and skills for forest planning is an existential requirement
- Stakeholder commitment to making more resources available for forest planning and management is advocated.
- Commitment to global best practices in the forest sector will go a long way in enhancing sustainable forest management
- Reliable data and information in good quality and quantity are essential ingredients for forest planning and management





Thank you

