

Comparative analysis of policy-making and implementation regarding integrated forest management

Panel 8		
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Abstract Panel 8 – Comparative analysis of policy-making and implementation regarding integrated forest management.

The literature on integrated forest governance has established that forest policy integration is sometimes successful but often remains rhetoric due to institutional and conceptual hurdles for effective policy design: policy networks often don't connect the affected actors sufficiently, knowledge about effective conservation strategies is lacking, financial compensation schemes are insufficient or not designed for integrated approaches, etc. As a result, strategies to integrate biodiversity conservation in forest management, as included e.g. in Natura 2000 management plans, remain vague for practice and this is often why much responsibility is delegated to local foresters. A large share of the implementing actors reject forest management prescriptions that restrict flexibility, and responsibility for forest biodiversity is often assumed by public / state forests. Participation in and compliance with voluntary instruments supporting the integration of biodiversity objectives in private forests is mainly contingent on economic incentives and personal convictions. While a gap hence remains in praxis between what is formulated on paper and actually implemented in the forest, some progress can also be detected. State forest actors have differentiated old- and deadwood concepts, which include different types of deadwood and connecting elements, alternative forest management options such as "sparse forest", the promotion of historic types of forest or particular species uses are gaining ground, policy processes are becoming more integrated and scientifically informed and compensation schemes are being improved in some contexts. The panel will thus bring together research that compares across contexts or applications and aims at understanding better the barriers to integrated approaches in policy-formation and implementation but particularly also why innovations in that respect come about. The main focus lies on the integration of biodiversity conservation measures into the managed forest, however, we also welcome comparative research on the integration of other objectives (recreation, hunting, climate change).