

The Intergovernmental Panel on Forests
and
The Intergovernmental Forum on Forests

National assessment of Australia's progress in implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action

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Preface

The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) has facilitated extensive deliberations on the actions required to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests by initially establishing the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and then the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). Between 1995 and 2000, the IPF and the IFF examined a wide range of forest-related topics and recommended more than 270 proposals for action to be adopted by the international community.

In 2000, the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) was established and will be the permanent intergovernmental body responsible for overseeing the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action as well as enhancing cooperation and maintaining forest policy dialogue.

To facilitate the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action by countries and the international community, Australia has prepared a package of three documents including a comprehensive, integrated summary of the proposals for action. The summary booklet — *Summary of Proposals for Action* — summarises the IPF/IFF proposals for action into 92 proposals under 4 main headings and 18 sub-headings. It aims to articulate the intent of the IPF/IFF proposals for action by simplifying the wording and by grouping related proposals for action.

The second component of the package — *Proposals for Action* — is a booklet that details the actual wording of the final IPF and IFF proposals for action. It is designed to be read in conjunction with the *Summary of Proposals for Action* booklet in order to provide the full context for each proposal.

The third component of the package — *National Assessment of Australia's Progress in Implementing the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action* — is a booklet that details Australia's progress, at a national scale, in implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action. It has been prepared in consultation with all State and Territory jurisdictions and key national stakeholder groups.

The package of documents could be used by countries to assist with their own national assessment of progress in implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

Background

The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development has facilitated extensive deliberations on the actions that are required to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

The *Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)* met four times during the period 1995–1997. It was mandated to pursue consensus and formulate options for further actions in order to combat deforestation and forest degradation and to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. The IPF's final report¹ contained more than 150 proposals for action, covering the five elements of its work program:

- implementation of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) decisions related to forests at the national and international levels;
- international cooperation in financial assistance and technology transfer;
- scientific research, forest assessment, and development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management;
- trade and environment in relation to forest products and services;
- international organisations and multilateral institutions, and instruments, including appropriate legal mechanisms.

The *Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF)* met four times during the period 1997–2000. It was mandated to facilitate implementation of the IPF proposals for action and to further the policy dialogue on a number of issues that were left pending from the IPF process. The IFF's final report² contained more than 120 additional proposals for action, covering the eight categories three categories and eight elements of its work program.

¹ Report of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, March 1997 (E/CN.17/1997/12)

² Report of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, March 2000 (E/CN.17/2000/14)

Category I included:

- promoting and facilitating the implementation of the IPF's proposals for action; and
- reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

Category II included matters left pending from IPF on:

- the need for financial resources;
- trade and environment;
- transfer of environmentally sustainable technology;
- issues needing further clarification including: underlying causes of deforestation; traditional forest-related knowledge; forest conservation and protected areas; forest research; valuation of forest goods and services; economic instruments, tax policies and land tenure; future supply and demand for wood and non-wood products; and assessment, monitoring and rehabilitation of forest cover in environmentally critical areas; and
- forest-related work of international and regional organisations.

Category III related to future international arrangements and mechanisms for forests.

Although the IPF/IFF proposals for action are of a non-legally binding nature, participants of these processes are under a political obligation to implement the agreed proposals for action. Each country is expected to conduct a systematic national assessment of the IPF/IFF proposals for action and to plan for their implementation.

Draft assessment approach

The IPF and IFF proposals for action often involve lengthy negotiated text. They contain numerous overlaps and interlinkages and they vary considerably in nature and content, from basic principles and guidelines to detailed specific recommendations. In order to simplify understanding of the intent of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, and to facilitate the conduct of national assessments, Australia has prepared a summary of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

The summary has been prepared using the following principles:

- capture the important aspects or intent of each proposals for action;
- group similar or related actions into the one ‘summarised proposal for action’;
- separate large complex actions into meaningful components;
- avoid duplication of any action unless the action is directed at different parties;
- incorporate some IPF and IFF program headings and actions into other related thematic headings;
- incorporate all related thematic headings into one of four major categories: implementation within countries; international cooperation; trade and environment; and work of international organisations; and
- group all related summarised proposals for actions under the most relevant heading.

This summary of the IPF proposals for action is intended to provide a guide to the implementation of the detailed IPF proposals for action. It is not intended to replace the detailed negotiated text. For this reason, the following tables are presented in a manner whereby each summarised proposal for action is cross referenced to the relevant paragraphs of the IPF and IFF reports that contain the full text of the agreed proposals for

action. In this summary the words sustainable forest management mean the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forest.

The assessment covers Australia's progress in implementation of the proposals for action within Australia and also progress in terms of Australia's international cooperation. The rankings for the international component are given on the basis of Australia's capacity to contribute and ability to influence rather than ranking the proposals in terms of overall global significance.

Assessment ranking

In undertaking the assessment, the following system was used.

Priority for implementation	Progress with implementation
NR=Not relevant L=Low M=Medium H=High	0=Not started 1=Program commenced 2=Program well under way 3=Substantial progress 4=Substantially completed

Implementation of international forest-related decisions within countries

National forest programs

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
1	Develop and implement a holistic national forest program which integrates the conservation and sustainable use of forest resources and values in a way that is consistent with national, sub-national and local policies and strategies.	17a, 58b(i)		H3	H1
2	Assess, develop and implement an appropriate combination of legislation, economic instruments and tax policies for promoting sustainable forest management.		115a, 115b, 115c	H2	M1
3	Develop and implement appropriate policies and mechanisms to secure land tenure, recognise access to and use of forest resources by local and/or indigenous communities in order to support sustainable forest management.	29c	64c, 64d, 115d	M1	M1
4	Develop and implement codes of conduct to encourage private sector activities consistent with sustainable forest management.	69a, 128c		H3	H2
5	Improve cooperation, coordination and partnerships in support of sustainable forest management within a national forest program, by involving relevant stakeholders including indigenous people, forest owners, women and local communities in forest decision making and utilising appropriate expertise in international and regional organisations.	17b, 17f, 17h, 17i, 40e	19b, 64b, 66, 140a	M2	M1
6	Monitor, evaluate and report on implementation progress of a national forest program, incorporating the use of criteria and indicators to assess trends in the state of the forests and progress towards sustainable forest management.	17a, 17d, 89a, 115a	17d, 19a	H2	H2

Implementation of IPF and IFF proposals for action

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
1	Conduct a systematic national assessment of the IPF and IFF proposals for action involving all stakeholders and plan for their implementation within a national forest program.		9d,	M3	M0
2	Establish a coordinated, integrated and participatory approach to the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action and the forest-related work of other international instruments.	144	9b, 9e, 9f	M1	M0
3	Report on the assessment and implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.		17c	M2	M0

Forest information and awareness

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
1	Prepare national information on sustainable forest management, including forest resource assessments and forest statistics on wood and non-wood forest products and services.	89b	17a, 121a, 121b	H3	M1
2	Improve the collection of quantitative data on values of all forest goods and services and environmental and social impacts of changes in forest use to assist policy and investment decisions.	104a	107a, 107c	H1	M1
3	Improve data collection and information dissemination on the supply and demand of wood and non-wood products including the prices of these products and their substitutes.	28a, 131a	121a, 121c, 121d	H2	M1

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
4	Establish improved mechanisms to consult stakeholders on the identification of the full range of forest goods and services and to make forest-related information and progress reports widely available to policy makers and relevant stakeholders.	30a, 78a, 78b, 58b(ii), 89h	17b, 18, 122d	M2	M0
5	Create awareness of the importance of issues related to deforestation and forest degradation and the multiple values of forests.	30a	64e, 142a	H1	M0

Underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
1	Study and analyse historical and underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, including the impacts of transboundary pollution, poverty, fuelwood collection and processes outside the forest sector.	27a, 27b, 27c	64a, 122c	M2	M1
2	Develop and implement integrated national policies, strategies, economic instruments and mechanisms for supporting sustainable forest management and addressing deforestation and forest degradation.	29a, 29b	115c, 115g	M2	M1
3	Enhance the role of plantations as a mechanism for reducing deforestation and forest degradation of natural forests.	28b	64g	H3	H1

Future supply and demand of forest products

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
1	Implement public and private sector policies and programs to meet increasing demands for wood and non-wood products and services, including fuelwood and wood energy, from sustainably managed forests.	28a	122a, 122b, 122c, 122d	M3	M1
2	Analyse the full life cycle costs and benefits, including environmental impacts, of forest products and their substitutes as a basis for reviewing policies that affect their relative prices and for developing incentives to support sustainable forest management and combat deforestation and forest degradation.		41c, 41d, 41e, 64h, 121e, 122f	M1	L0

Protected areas and forest conservation

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
1	Develop and implement appropriate planning and management strategies for the representative protection and conservation of the full range of forest values on an ecosystem basis within and outside protected areas.	46c	85a, 85b	H3	H3
2	Develop and implement partnership mechanisms to engage forest owners, private sector, indigenous people and local communities in the planning and management of forest conservation areas.		84, 85b, 85c, 85d	M1	M1
3	Develop and implement innovative mechanisms and improved coordination of donor activity, for effectively financing, encouraging and implementing integrated cross-sectoral policies to support forest conservation.		85f, 90	M1	M0

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
4	Develop and implement methodologies and criteria to assess the adequacy, consistency, condition and effectiveness of protected areas and their management.		85e, 88, 89	M2	M2
5	Establish joint protected areas and guidelines for collaborative management of ecologically important or unique transboundary forests.		86	M3	M0

Forests in environmentally critical areas

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
1	Analyse past experiences and monitor trends in dry land forests, including biophysical, social, economic and institutional factors.	46b		L2	L1
2	Undertake integrated and coordinated actions to address dryland forest issues at the international, national and local levels.	46a, 46f		M2	L1
3	Develop and support partnerships which include indigenous and local communities and management approaches, including those that embody traditional lifestyles, to reduce pressures on dryland forests and promote their sustainable management and regeneration.	46d, 46e		M2	L1
4	Encourage cooperation and coordination of activities concerning forests and trees in environmentally critical areas, including systematic data collection and analysis.		129a	L2	M1
5	Give high priority in national forest programs to the rehabilitation and sustainable management of forests and trees in environmentally critical areas.		129b	L2	L1

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
6	Raise awareness and disseminate data on the ecological, social, cultural and economic contributions of planted and natural forests in the rehabilitation and sustainable management of forests in environmentally critical areas.		129a, 129d	L2	M1

Impact of airborne pollution on forests

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
1	Develop national assessment and monitoring methods, extend regional programs for monitoring impacts of air pollution and provide factual information about transboundary air pollution.	50c, 50d, 27c		NR	NR
2	Adopt a preventative approach to the reduction of damaging air pollution.	50a		L2	NR

Forest research and development

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
1	Identify and prioritise interdisciplinary forest research needs at the national and eco-regional levels.	94a	96a	M2	M1
2	Strengthen forest research by formulating national policies, programs and strategies and by coordinating the implementation of research programs.		96a	M2	M1

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
3	Mobilise resources, foster public and private sector joint ventures, build capacity and strengthen research institutions, networks and consortia to extend forest research at the local, national and international levels.	94a, 94d	96b, 97b, 97d	H3	M1
4	Further develop and enhance widespread access to forest research and information systems making best use of existing mechanisms and networks.	94a	97c	M2	M1
5	Improve the linkages between forest science and forest policy processes.	58b(vii)	96c	H3	M2
6	Involve relevant interested parties in the extension, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of forest research and ensure appropriate prior consents are obtained for research programs.	17e, 94d	96d	M2	M1
7	Further develop, field test and promote the use of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, including appropriate criteria and indicators for traditional forest-related knowledge and air pollution, and support efforts to harmonise associated concepts and definitions.	40l, 50d 115a, 115b, 115d	17d	H2	H1
8	Extend research into forest inventory and monitoring techniques, as well as the development of efficient methods for the valuation of all forest goods and services and for the identification of costs and benefits of sustainable forest management.	89c, 104c	107b, 107c	H2	H1
9	Explore ways to establish full cost internalisation of wood products and non-wood substitutes, as well as externalities, and share information on findings and implementation.	134a, 134b		M1	L0
10	Promote research into the rehabilitation and extension of dryland forests as well as into traditional forest-related knowledge with the full involvement of indigenous peoples and local communities.	40k, 46g		M1	L1

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
11	Develop and adapt technologies, including traditional forest-related knowledge, for increasing sustainable utilisation of lesser-used species.	132c		L1	L1

Traditional forest-related knowledge

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
1	Collaborate with and enhance the capacity of indigenous people to identify, map and promote the understanding and application of traditional forest-related knowledge at the local, national and international levels.	40a, 40g, 40j, 40n	75	M1	L1
2	Develop and implement national legislation and policies, including the application of intellectual property rights, to respect, maintain, protect and apply traditional forest-related knowledge.	40c, 40d, 40p, 40b	74d	L2	L0
3	Develop and implement policies and mechanisms to support traditional resource use systems and ensure equitable sharing of forest-related benefits, including use of forest genetic resources, with local communities and indigenous people and document successful approaches.	40f, 40h, 40l, 40r, 40c	56j, 64c, 66, 74b, 122d	M1	M1
4	Assist networks that promote sharing of traditional forest-related knowledge and include traditional forest-related knowledge in forest management training programs.	40l, 40m		M1	L1

Requirements of countries with low forest cover

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
1	Analyse and take into account the related social, economic and environmental implications, costs and benefits of non-wood substitutes and imports of forest products.	58b(iv)	41h	NR	NR
2	Take positive action towards reforestation, afforestation and conservation, using native species where appropriate, including regeneration of degraded forests, management of plantations and trees outside forests and the expansion of protected areas.	58b(ii), 58b(iii), 58b(v), 58c	30b, 129c	NR	L1
3	Establish and manage plantations to enhance production of forest goods and services, taking into account relevant social, cultural, economic and environmental considerations in the selection of species, areas and silviculture systems.	58b(ii)		NR	L1

International cooperation in financial assistance and technology transfer

Provision of financial resources to developing countries and countries with economies in transition

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
1	Create or strengthen partnerships and international cooperation to facilitate the provision of increased financial resources to implement sustainable forest management including the IPF/IFF proposals for action.	17c, 67a	9a, 9c, 9g, 30a, 84, 87, 97a, 129e	NR	H1
2	Identify and prioritise resource needs for sustainable forest management, including the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.	67b, 67c, 30b, 133b	17e, 30b	NR	H0
3	Explore and expand innovative financial mechanisms including concessional lending, debt relief initiatives and an investment promotion entity to support sustainable forest management and national forest programs.	17c, 67e, 67g, 71c	30e, 64j	NR	H0
4	Encourage private sector investment and reinvestment of forest revenues into sustainable forest management and environmentally sound technologies, through appropriate policies, legislation, incentives and mechanisms.	69b, 69c, 69d, 69e, 70b, 77d	30c, 56b, 115a, 115b, 122b	NR	M1
5	Enhance government, community and forest owner financing to facilitate local participation in sustainable forest management.	70c, 77f	64f	NR	M2
6	Enhance coordination and collaboration between donors, international institutions and instruments related to forests and explore appropriate indicators for monitoring and evaluating donor-funded forest programs.	71a, 71b		NR	M2
7	Support coordinated deployment of resources for sustainable forest management through national forest programs to improve efficiency and effectiveness of available funds.	70a, 70d, 17g	30a	NR	M1

Technology transfer and capacity building

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
1	Assess, taking into account gender disaggregated data, the technological requirements necessary to achieve sustainable forest management.	77b	56c, 56o	NR	M1
2	Enhance cooperation and financing to promote access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies.	77a, 77c	56a, 56e, 56g, 56h, 56i, 56l, 129e	NR	M2
3	Facilitate capacity building within national forest programs to implement sustainable forest management and the IPF/IFF proposals for action, including strengthening and supporting institutions involved in forest and plantation management and supporting indigenous people, local forest-dependent communities and forest owners.	17g, 28a, 58b(vi), 70e, 77e, 77f, 89b, 115c	17a, 19b, 56d, 64e, 64i, 107d	L3	H2
4	Support developing countries to increase downstream processing and community-based processing of wood and non-timber forest products.	131b		NR	M2
5	Promote the dissemination and sharing of environmentally sound technologies to end-users, particularly in local communities, including through efficient use of extension services.	77e	56f, 56h	L3	M1
6	Strengthen education and training for women in community development programs including the growth and use of fuelwood and the use of energy efficient cooking technology and ensure women benefit from the transfer of environmentally sound technologies.		56m, 56n	NR	M1

Trade and environment in relation to forest products and services

Market access and transparency

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
1	Study the environmental, social and economic impacts of trade-related measures affecting forest products and services.	128a		L3	M2
2	Undertake measures to improve market access for forest goods and services, including the reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, in accordance with existing international obligations and to promote a mutually supportive relationship between environment and trade.	128b	64i	L1	H2
3	Improve market transparency for trade in forest products and services and consider measures to reduce illegal trade in wood and non-wood forest products.	135a, 135b	41e, 41f	NR	M2
4	Implement policies and actions to facilitate trade in wood and non-wood products from sustainably managed forests and to minimise negative effects of short-term market changes.		41a, 41g	H2	M1
5	Undertake further cooperative work on voluntary certification and labelling schemes, including studying their link with criteria and indicators and their effectiveness in promoting sustainable forest management and exchange information and experience on these schemes.	133a, 133d, 133e, 133g	41b	H1	H1
6	Support the application of accessibility, credibility, equivalence, cost-effectiveness, transparency and participatory concepts to certification and labelling schemes and ensure they do not lead to unjustified obstacles to market access.	133c, 133f	41b	H1	H1

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
7	Intensify efforts and implement policies to promote the sustainable use of all economically viable lesser-used species in domestic and international markets.	132a, 132b		L1	L2

Forest-related work of international organisations and multilateral institutions and instruments

Involvement of countries in international programs

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
1	Support the forest work undertaken by international and regional organisations and under relevant international instruments and encourage them to contribute to forest policy dialogue and to support inter-agency cooperation on the implementation of the outcomes of UNCED, the UNCCC, Kyoto Protocol and the IPF and IFF processes.	146a, 146d, 146e	139a, 139b, 141a	NR	H2
2	Clarify the forest-related roles of international institutions and instruments to improve integration and coordination and eliminate duplication of their efforts.	146b, 146c	139c	NR	H1
3	Strengthen national arrangements to provide guidance to multilateral forest-related organisations		140b	NR	M1

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
4	Facilitate work under the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant organisations (WIPO, UNCTAD) to implement measures to recognise, respect, protect and maintain traditional forest-related knowledge including the application of intellectual property rights, <i>sui generis</i> or other systems for its protection.	40o	56j, 74a, 74c, 75	NR	M1
5	Contribute national data on timber and non-timber values to the FAO Global Forest Resource Assessments.	89d		NR	M2
6	Contribute to a global and regional comprehensive assessment of the current status of protected forest areas, to assist in the establishment of biogeographically balanced protected area networks.		85g	M2	M1
7	Participate in the international development of global guidelines for consistent national interpretation and implementation of IUCN categories of protected areas.		89	NR	M2
8	Strengthen international cooperation and action with respect to reducing long-range air pollution.	50b, 50e		NR	L1

Work of international organisations

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
1	Continue collaborative work to support the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action and the provision of information to assist the forest sector.	78c, 145		NR	H1
2	Develop institutional synergies with other partners and prepare a comprehensive directory of organisations and instruments engaged in forest-related activities.		141b, 141c	NR	M1
3	Provide general, cross-sectoral and specific advice to countries on forest policies and the design and administration of economic instruments and tax policies to promote sustainable forest management.		115f, 142b	NR	M1
4	Strengthen transparency of decision making in international financial institutions and ensure their policies and structural adjustment programs support sustainable forest management.		65, 115g	NR	H1
5	Develop harmonised, cost-effective, comprehensive national forest reporting formats and data systems incorporating relevant criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.	89g, 115e	19a, 142c	NR	H1
6	Consult with countries about forest assessment definitions as well as the collection and analysis of forest information, including the global forest resource assessment, and provide feedback on the results.	89e, 89f	18	NR	M2
7	Prepare information on methods and data requirements for the valuation of all forest goods and services.	104b		NR	M1
8	Undertake systematic collection and analysis of forest sector financial flows data to assist informed policy decisions.		30d	NR	M1

	Summarised proposal for action	IPF	IFF	National assessment	International assessment
9	Undertake reviews of contemporary forest revenue collection systems and the relation of land tenure to deforestation and forest degradation.		67, 115e	NR	M1
10	Increase public awareness of the direct and indirect benefits from forests at the regional and global levels.		142a	NR	H1
11	Improve support for forest-related research programs, strengthen linkages between forest policy and research and explore the possibility of a global forest information service.	94c	98a, 98b, 98c	NR	H1
12	Encourage, within the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the development of biodiversity indicators that are complementary to existing forest criteria and indicators as well as the compilation of legal mechanisms related to the protection, use and benefit sharing of traditional forest-related knowledge.	40q, 115f		NR	M1
13	Promote research and analysis by forest-related Conventions to address gaps in existing knowledge.	94b		NR	M1
14	Consider the needs of developing and low forest cover countries, support forest programs and integrate forest-related aspects into poverty, population, food and environmental programs.		143, 144	NR	M1

Comments supporting draft assessment

Domestic implementation of international forest-related decisions

Implementation through national forest programs

Considerable progress has been made in the implementation of a holistic forest program. The National Forest Policy Statement provides direction together with the Ministerial Councils, Standing Committees, State governments and increasingly effective community consultation. Comprehensive regional assessments have focused on State Forests, associated Crown-timber land and National Parks and other conservation reserves. The resulting Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) are completed or approaching completion across Australia. However this program has not included many large areas of private, leasehold and conservation forest. Tasmania is the only State to be completely covered. To date NSW is the only State to commence a comprehensive assessment outside the agreed RFA forest areas.

Most States have legislation that imposes management constraints directed at achieving sustainable forest management. However NSW, Victoria and South Australia have in the last two years passed legislation that encourages and facilitates plantation establishment and the commerciality of carbon rights.

Some States, including NSW and Queensland, are exploring the transfer of management or co-management of forest by Indigenous communities. Large areas of Australia are currently the subject of native title claim and the role of Indigenous communities in future forest management is yet to be determined.

Codes of Conduct (Practice) or Guidelines (SA) for sustainable timber production are in place as follows:

- Tasmania — across all tenures;
- Victoria — across all tenures;
- Western Australia — plantations and native forests;
- South Australia — plantations across all tenures;
- New South Wales — all State Forest; private plantations and native forest under development;
- Queensland — native forest in south-east Queensland and cypress on all tenures for which the Crown holds timber rights. A revision for application to the whole State for tenures to which the Crown holds timber rights is under way. Plantation Code is developed but not formally adopted. Crown Land Fire Code, Freehold Land Native Forest, Freehold Land Plantation Codes are under development; and
- ACT — public plantations.

All States are developing environmental management systems to ISO 14000 standard for State Forest management (Queensland's commercial management is already certified). These systems will demonstrate that procedures are in place to deliver sustainable forest management.

A wide range of stakeholders have been contributing to forest management decision making on both State Forest and other tenures in a variety of ways across Australia for many years. This consultation has recently involved Regional Forest Agreement processes, and continues on a range of issues at national, regional and local levels. During the Regional Forest Agreement process Victoria established Independent Panels to facilitate an improved consultation process ensuring that all community stakeholders are heard by the government and can contribute to deciding the future. The Independent Panels reviewed all submissions received on the Gippsland and West Victoria Regional Forest Agreements and conducted public hearings where individuals or groups indicated that they wished to speak to their submissions.

Victoria has recently established three Regional Forest Reference Groups — in the Otways, Midlands and East Gippsland. The groups have been established to provide: a forum for raising forest management issues; an exchange of views between stakeholders; advice on issues associated with

the implementation of the Regional Forest Agreement and other forest management issues.

Forest sustainability criteria and indicators have been developed for use at a sub-national (regional) level and have been endorsed by forestry and environment Ministers. In particular they are being implemented on State Forests and National Parks subject to a Regional Forest Agreement. The Montreal Process Implementation Group for Australia (MIG) is coordinating Australia's implementation of sustainability criteria and indicators and is currently exploring ways to meaningfully extend their use to other tenures. The MIG also oversees research and development activities on the more difficult-to-measure indicators to determine if they can be implemented in a practical, cost-effective manner. NSW has produced an annual environmental and social values report, however it only applies to State Forest and National Parks. The implementation of criteria and indicators is of high priority because they are the tools to monitor sustainable forest management and contribute to regional (including RFA areas), State and national reporting requirements. To this end, the MIG and National Forest Inventory (NFI) have developed a process for collection of Category A data (data based on the regional framework that is currently collectable and reportable) that will be compiled and evaluated with a view to releasing a public report in mid 2001.

Implementation of IPF and IFF proposals for action

These three proposals relate to this assessment which has clearly commenced. It has been given a medium priority because while it is of importance at the national/international level it has less significance at the State and regional level.

Forest information

Quantitative data on forest resources are more advanced on those areas that were subject to a comprehensive regional assessment than elsewhere. Reasonable data sets are also available for other publicly owned forests. Resource data on private and leasehold forest are generally of lower quality or nonexistent. The priority for the collection of data for all tenures is high if forests are to be managed for both wood, non-wood products and other values in a sustainable manner. To demonstrate forest management is on the path to sustainability, resource data will require periodic updating and thus is part of an ongoing process. There is increasing community expectation that inventory data (timber, biodiversity, other products, social and economic) and analysis will be of

high quality and readily auditable. Tasmania has prepared a State of the Forests report and Victoria has commenced the process.

National data on timber and non-timber values have been provided to the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment.

Stakeholder consultation is important to ensure the full range of forest goods and services are identified and managed appropriately. Provision of information and reports to stakeholders can increase their understanding of forest management decisions. Reports have been made available as part of the RFA process.

There is increasing awareness of the impact of deforestation on the carbon cycle, erosion, salinity and water quality. There is already a good understanding of the multiple values of forests. Governments in all States and Territories are acting to increase awareness of relevant issues. The implementation of sustainability indicators through the MIG is an important ongoing task.

Underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation

Causes of deforestation and forest degradation are well understood in Australia. They generally relate to changing land use. Further analysis of causes is considered to be of low priority.

Policies, strategies and mechanisms are generally in place or under development to address these issues. Incentive schemes that encourage deforestation need to be re-evaluated.

Plantation establishment is being supported and encouraged under Vision 2020 with all States having active plantation programs. While these plantations are being established primarily to increase timber production they also provide environmental benefits and in some areas, environmental rehabilitation (such as salinity control) is the principal objective.

Future supply and demand for forest products

Policies to meet increasing demand for wood and non-wood forest products are largely in place, however markets continue to evolve and policies require updating on a periodic basis.

Life cycle analysis of forest products is a complex process. Work has commenced through the Cooperative Research Centre for Greenhouse

Accounting involving scientists from NSW, Western Australia and organisations such as the Australian Greenhouse Office.

Traditional forest-related knowledge

Most emphasis to date has focused on identifying and conserving areas of Indigenous heritage value. State and Territory processes include identification of cultural heritage sites prior to harvesting to ensure that any areas of significance are identified and protected. In general little effort has yet gone into accessing traditional ecological land management knowledge and assessing its value and role in future sustainable forest management. This is considered to be a medium priority as formal recognition is being given to the role of Indigenous communities in the management of forest and woodlands particularly in northern Australia. NT Parks and Wildlife Commission have done work in this area.

Intellectual property rights are recognised. Site information is often provided to government agencies in confidence to ensure it is taken into account in planning and operational forest management.

In Queensland, and in the Northern Territory and Western Australia through the work of the Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Savannas, work is being done with Indigenous communities to gain a better understanding of their use of fire. In north Queensland at Arakoon there is community forestry decision making with traditional knowledge input into both harvesting and conservation management.

Indigenous cultural heritage is now part of field training programs for forestry officers in most States and Territories. Input from Indigenous communities is now regularly sought on forest management and consultative committees.

Forests in environmentally critical areas

The IFF recognised that forests in environmentally critical areas are especially susceptible to degradation and destruction resulting from human activities and from natural disturbances. The Forum expanded the scope of attention to the rehabilitation and sustainable management of forest cover in environmentally critical areas, sub-humid, arid and semi-arid areas, in tropical and temperate regions, mountain ecosystems, wetlands, coastal systems in, particular mangroves and small islands, as well as trees outside forests. In Australia some environmentally sensitive areas have resulted from the clearing of forests for other land uses, that over time have resulted in erosion, salinity, remnant tree dieback and declining water quality. All States have recognised the need to control

clearing, retain existing native vegetation, implement improved management and where necessary foster regeneration or establish a replanting program.

In most States dryland forests are no longer under threat from clearing and have therefore been accorded a low priority for action.

At the regional level, Landcare and Greening Australia are playing important roles. At a larger scale, State agencies have initiated plantation programs to address salinity. For example in Western Australia, tree planting is being used as a key method to control saline water tables in the Wellington catchment of the Collie River. Most States and Territories have established species trials on currently non-forested, mainly agricultural land. Establishment programs have been initiated with rural and corporate support.

Where clearing controls are in place it is considered that the pressures on existing dryland forests are relatively low and high priority should and is being given to assessing and rehabilitating areas of environmental significance.

Raising awareness and dissemination of data on the ecological, social, cultural and economic contribution of trees is being done by State agencies, NGOs and organisations such as the Murray Darling Basin Commission.

Impact of airborne pollution on forests

Airborne pollution is controlled by strict emission control regulations in Australia and the impact of airborne pollution is generally not an issue for sustainable forest management.

Requirements of countries with low forest cover

Forest and woodlands in Australia comprise approximately 20 per cent of the country that meets the cut off as defined by FAO for IPF meaning that Australia cannot be termed a 'low forest cover country'. This issue was referred to the Standing Committee on Forestry (SCF) to further consider whether Australia should report against the low forest cover proposals.

Protected areas and forest conservation

The majority of proposals in this program have been given a medium priority for implementation as conservation reserves are not subject to

harvesting or threatened by clearing. Representative protection and conservation is a high priority and is well progressed through the RFA process and national and State biodiversity strategies.

Partnerships or consultation mechanisms are in place to assist in planning and management in many conservation reserves across Australia (e.g. Advisory Committees for National Parks in NSW).

Direct donor activity is uncommon with external funding being channelled through NGOs such as the National Parks and Wildlife Foundation and other Trusts.

Scientific studies of the effectiveness of protected forest areas and their management is limited and many State and Territory agencies are in the process of documenting the need to monitor and assess conservation effectiveness in their management plans.

Australia is contributing globally to conservation and already has a number of World Heritage areas.

At the national level transboundary issues are not relevant, as Australia does not border other countries. However, at the sub-national level transboundary issues are relevant, for example Alps National Park, and sub-national management arrangements have been developed and implemented.

The development of global guidelines to enable consistent interpretation of IUCN protected areas is important to ensure a level playing field for both conservation and forestry objectives. This work is in its early stages.

International cooperation in financial assistance and technology transfer

Financial assistance

These proposals are not of major concern within Australia and are best dealt with at the international level.

Both State and Commonwealth resources are used for overseas aid and development programs.

Encouraging private sector investment provides the opportunity and funds to move towards sustainable management.

Australia does not believe that the inclusion of debt relief initiatives is appropriate in this context of exploring and expanding innovative financial mechanisms in support of sustainable forest management and national forest programs. Australia is, however, supportive of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief initiative.

Any Expansion in concessional lending should be consistent with performance-based lending frameworks of the multilateral development banks.

Technology transfer and capacity building

Australia supports the transfer of technology to take advantage of new technology and technological circumstances, as well as the acquisition of new skills.

The Australian overseas aid program also supports activities that build capacity within countries. Some examples include institutional capacity building, as well as capacity building for public awareness, for improved coordination and cooperation at the community, national, regional and international level, and for improved decision making.

State resources are used when required including State-developed environmentally friendly technologies. There are numerous examples throughout the Asia–Pacific region.

Many States have mutual aid programs or have developed environmentally friendly technologies which they share commonly with countries throughout Asia and the Pacific Rim. Victoria has provided training and network support to East Timor

Research, valuation and demand and supply of forest products

Forest research

Considerable progress has been made in all the research proposals except the proposal relating to dryland forest as well as traditional forest-related knowledge where work has now commenced.

High priority has been given to research dedicated to improving inventory and monitoring for forest sustainability. These are considered to be two of

the key issues to be addressed to ensure sustainable forest management can be both implemented and demonstrated.

Involvement of interested parties in the research process to determine priorities and procedures and to ensure transparency and credibility is commonplace.

It is also a high priority to ensure that forest research outcomes are clearly linked into forest policy processes.

Trade and environment in relation to forest products and services

Market access and transparency

The first three proposals relating to trade and/or tariff barriers are not considered relevant within Australia.

Three proposals have high priority to Australia. These relate to the ability to demonstrate that forest products are being obtained from sustainably managed forests. The implementation of codes of practice, criteria and indicators for sustainability, environmental management systems to ISO 14001 standard, and compliance with the Australian Forestry Standard (under development) will provide transparency and the opportunity to obtain certification, thereby contributing to market access.

A low priority has been given to the promotion of lesser-used species in domestic and international markets. This is considered appropriate until international market recognition is gained for Australia's key forest species. However, there is recognition that lesser-used species may be valuable in the future.

International organisations and multinational institutions and instruments

The majority of these proposals for action are specifically targeted at international organisations and therefore are not relevant for implementation within Australia, but relevant to Australia's international programs.

Harmonised, cost-effective, comprehensive practical national reporting formats have relevance both within Australia and at the national level.

Synergies with international partners have been developed by some States. For example State Forests of NSW has had a strong working relationship with the New Zealand Forest Research Institute and the Queensland Forest Research Institute has been working with Pacific nations for some years.

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) has funded work in the region enhancing the capacity of indigenous peoples to promote the understanding and application of Traditional Forest Related Knowledge. ACIAR has also funded various reforestation projects in the region.