



Evaluation of the CGIAR Research Program “Forests, Trees and Agroforestry” (FTA)

Synthesis report

July 2014



Federica Coccia
Andrea Deisenrieder
Marko Katila
Florencia Montagnini
Markus Palenberg (Team Leader)
Carmenza Robledo



Independent
Evaluation
Arrangement

This evaluation has been commissioned by the Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) of CGIAR.

The Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) of CGIAR encourages fair use of this material provided proper citation is made.

Correct citation: CGIAR-IEA (2014), Evaluation of CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees, and Agroforestry (FTA). Rome, Italy: Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) of CGIAR.

<http://iea.cgiar.org/>

Table of Contents

Glossary and Acronyms.....	2
Acknowledgments.....	5
List of Recommendations.....	6
Synthesis Report	8
1 Introduction	8
1.1 This evaluation	8
1.2 FTA in the evolving CGIAR.....	9
1.3 FTA theory of change.....	12
2 Relevance and comparative advantage	14
2.1 Global relevance.....	14
2.2 Component structure and thematic focus.....	17
2.3 Comparative advantage.....	21
3 Quality of science and effectiveness.....	24
3.1 Quality of science	24
3.2 Effectiveness.....	25
4 Cross-cutting activities	29
4.1 Sentinel Landscapes	29
4.3 Partnerships.....	32
4.4 Capacity development	34
5 Effectiveness and efficiency of institutional arrangements.....	35
5.1 Financial management.....	36
5.2 Data management and reporting	38
6 Governance and management	39
6.1 FTA governance.....	39
6.2 FTA management.....	41
6.3 Performance-based resource allocation in the CGIAR	42
7 FTA added value to date and the way forward	43
Bibliography	46

Glossary and Acronyms

AFOLU	Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use.
BOT	Board of Trustees.
CATIE	Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza.
CCAFS	Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security.
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CGIAR	The name CGIAR comes from the acronym for the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. In 2008, CGIAR underwent a major transformation. The name and acronym CGIAR is retained for continuity.
CIAT	International Center for Tropical Agriculture.
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research.
CIRAD	Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement.
Component	One of FTA’s five principal program segments. Used alternating with “Theme” and “Flagship” in FTA documentation. The Inception Report consistently uses the term “Component” in order to avoid confusion (“Theme” describes components as well as sub-components and “Flagship Projects” are slightly different because of a more pronounced intended focus on a few outcomes).
Consortium	The legal entity “Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers.”
Component Coordinator	Person in charge of leading and coordinating a FTA Component across FTA Participant Institutions.
Component Focal Point	Person assisting a Component Coordinator within a FTA Participant Institution.
Cross-cutting activity	Umbrella term used in this report for various themes and support activities not constraint to a single FTA Component. Also termed “cross-cutting themes” and “program support” in FTA documentation. Cross-cutting activities vary in the degree to which they receive central program support and to which they are intended to be incorporated into work along program components.
CRP	CGIAR Research Program. The central programmatic modality for results-based research in the reformed CGIAR.
CRP6	CGIAR Research Program 6: Forests, Trees and Agroforestry. Referred to as “FTA” throughout this report.
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.
EFI	European Forest Institute.
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
Flagship	Also called “Flagships.” Key segments of CRPs under guidance for the

Project	second CRP call. Each FP has specific objectives and may produce several outputs and research outcomes in order to achieve in due course two or three Intermediate Development Outcomes or IDOs (rarely more). The term is not used in backward-looking parts of this evaluation as the concept hadn't been introduced.
FLEGT	(European) Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade.
FTA	CGIAR Research Program 6: Forests, Trees and Agroforestry: Livelihoods, Landscape, and Governance. In FTA documentation, FTA is also referred to as "CRP-FTA", "CRP6-FTA", "CRP6". Throughout this report "FTA" is chosen for convenience.
FTA Director	Person in charge of leading and coordinating FTA as a program. Also referred to as "Head of MSU" and "Program Coordinator" in FTA documentation.
FTA Evaluation Team	The 6 people team implementing this evaluation on behalf of the IEA.
FTA Participant Institutions	FTA Centers and other, non-CGIAR institutions that are part of the FTA Steering Committee.
GEF	Global Environment Facility.
GPFLR	Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration.
ICRAF	World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF refers to the original name of the center, International Council for Research in Agroforestry).
IDO	Intermediate Development Outcome.
IEA	CGIAR Independent Evaluation Arrangement.
ISPC	Independent Science and Partnership Council of the CGIAR.
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature.
Lead Center	CGIAR Center with overall legal and fiduciary responsibility for FTA. From program inception onwards, CIFOR has fulfilled this role.
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals.
MEIA	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Impact Assessment. MEIA is also the name of a team working on these topics within FTA.
MSU	Management Support Unit.
NARS	National Agricultural Research Systems.
NLBI	Non-legally Binding Instrument on all types of forests by UNFF.
OCS	One Corporate System.
PRGA	Systemwide Program on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis

RBM	Results-Based Management
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals.
SLO	System Level Outcome.
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises.
SOs	Strategic Objectives.
SRF	CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework.
Sub-component	One of several sub-segments within FTA’s principal program components. Used alternating with “Theme”, “Sub-Theme”, and “Cluster of Activities” in FTA documentation. This report consistently uses the term “sub-component” in order to avoid confusion (“Theme” describes components as well as sub-components and “Clusters of Activities” are slightly different because of a clearer intended focus on few outcomes).
Theme	Used to describe a topic or a thematic area. FTA documentation uses the term “theme” also to refer to program segments: for the 5 components, but also for sub-components. This report consistently uses the term “Component” for these segments in order to avoid confusion.
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme.
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
UNFF	United Nation Forum on Forests.
UN-REDD+/REDD+	"REDD+" goes beyond deforestation and forest degradation. It includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.
USD	United States Dollar.

Acknowledgments

The strong evidence-based findings presented in this report would not have been possible without the continued constructive contributions, feedback and support of a large number of people.

Foremost, the Evaluation Team thanks the FTA Director, the FTA Coordination Unit, the FTA Component Coordinators, coordinators of cross-cutting activities and focal points for their continued availability for interviews and for thoughtful contributions. The team also wishes to thank the DGs, DDGs, senior scientific and administrative Center staff, and interviewed Board members of all four FTA Participant Institutions (CIFOR, ICRAF, Bioversity International and CIAT) for making themselves available for extended interviews and discussions. Key staff from FTA's two non-CGIAR Participant Institutions made themselves repeatedly available and added their valuable perspectives to this evaluation's body of knowledge, for which the Evaluation Team wishes to thank them sincerely. The Evaluation Team also wishes to thank CIFOR, ICRAF and Bioversity International Center staff on all levels – from drivers to senior managers – for facilitating and helping to organize Center and field visits effectively and efficiently.

The team also thanks the CGIAR CEO and several staff members from the CGIAR Consortium Office for effective and candid interactions and for hosting the Evaluation Team at their offices in Montpellier for two days, and the Fund Council Executive Secretary and Head of Fund Office for extended interactions.

Many scientists involved in FTA have been interviewed by Evaluation Team members and an extraordinary 72 percent (225) have reacted to an online survey request. The Evaluation Team wishes to genuinely thank these people for investing their already scarce time into providing information important to this evaluation. The team also thanks more than 140 boundary partners that have provided their input into another online survey, as well as a large number of people who were interviewed beyond the CGIAR.

A special thank you goes to IEA support staff in Rome, and to FAO headquarter and country office staff that organized the field trips and provided great overall team support.

List of Recommendations

This list provides only the main text of the recommendations. For additional detail see the recommendation boxes throughout this synthesis report.

1. The Evaluation Team recommends that FTA's program and component-level objectives continue to be pursued programmatically because of their high global relevance. Several adjustments must be made to address emerging research themes, ensure better integration of forestry issues into the broader development agendas, and better balance current research priorities geographically.
2. The Evaluation Team recommends to better balance research priorities thematically, to adjust component coverage accordingly, and to establish "tenure" as a cross-cutting activity.
3. The Evaluation Team recommends that all FTA Participant Institutions safeguard their principal comparative advantage of being neutral, world class research institutions and resist pressures to work outside their areas of comparative advantage. CIFOR and ICRAF must further intensify their already close collaboration to maximize synergies and minimize unnecessary competition.
4. The Evaluation Team recommends that FTA further develops its results framework and impact pathways into a comprehensive theory of change and a framework for results-based management that explicitly acknowledges windows for opportunistic and blue-sky research. Based on this framework, FTA must then initiate active management of its entire research portfolio, including increased selectivity with regard to mapping bilaterally funded projects to the program.
5. The Evaluation Team recommends that as part of the preparations for FTA's second phase proposal, the FTA Steering Committee re-assesses the relevance and the financial sustainability of the current set of Sentinel Landscapes and adapt the entire approach to Sentinel Landscapes in the FTA Phase II Proposal accordingly.
6. The Evaluation Team recommends updating the FTA Gender strategy to better cover social diversity, scalability of findings, and earlier lessons learned. The FTA Steering Committee must monitor the degree to which gender-sensitive research is mainstreamed in FTA and take corrective action if Gender mainstreaming remains stagnant by year-end 2015.
7. The Evaluation Team recommends that FTA increases and makes more systematic efforts to reach out to and involve partners on all levels: program donors, relevant actors of strategic importance for FTA, and boundary partners. FTA must further

increase its efforts to include boundary partners into research priority setting, design, and implementation, develop their capacity, and ensure that FTA results targets respond to concrete needs of development partners.

8. The Evaluation Team recommends that the Fund Council and the Consortium Office improve the predictability, reliability and timely disbursement of Window 1 and 2 resources to FTA and urge CGIAR members to provide full cost recovery when acting as bilateral donors.
9. The Evaluation Team recommends that the quality and coherence of FTA data management be improved.
10. The Evaluation Team recommends strengthening and clarifying the mandate and the independent voice of the FTA Steering Committee, and to connect it better to the Consortium Board and Office.
11. The Evaluation Team recommends that the Director's mandate and independence, and FTA's overall line management reporting be strengthened.
12. The Evaluation Team recommends that the Fund Council, the Consortium Board and Office, the FTA Lead Center and FTA Participating Institutions work together to ensure a multi-year period of stable operations during which confidence and trust is built, the recommendations of this report are implemented, and important requirements for FTA's future success are put in place.

Synthesis Report

1 Introduction

1.1 This evaluation

The principal purpose of this evaluation is to enhance the contribution that the CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA) is likely to make to reaching CGIAR goals and to solving evolving global, regional and national forestry and agroforestry-related challenges. This evaluation is intended to inform both FTA's interim period until 2017 as well as its second phase from 2017 onwards.

The main audiences of this evaluation are the governance bodies and the management of FTA and its Participant Institutions, as well as the CGIAR Consortium Board and Office, and the CGIAR Fund Council, which will also be the ultimate recipient of this evaluation and its Management and Consortium responses.

Further audiences are FTA stakeholders external to the CGIAR, i.e. research partner organizations, national and international upstream boundary partners whose decisions and policies are to be informed by FTA research and downstream boundary partners, i.e. the intended intermediary users of FTA outputs.

A secondary purpose of the evaluation is to help the CGIAR Consortium Board and Office and the CGIAR Fund Council in building a body of experience on the suitability of structures, and governance and management arrangements of CGIAR Research Programs. Finally, the evaluation is also intended to provide the CGIAR Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) with implementation experience of this first CRP evaluation in view of future CRP evaluations.

The evaluation covers the period from program start in July 2011 to end of 2013 with the main inquiry phase taking place from October 2013 to February 2014. The evaluation is both summative and formative in nature, i.e. it examines the past to draw insights and recommendations for the future. It has a strong formative, forward-looking component that analyzes FTA's likelihood for generating future outcomes and impacts, and is centered on six evaluation questions:

1. How coherent and relevant are FTA objectives?
2. What is the comparative advantage of FTA?
3. Is FTA research of high quality?
4. Is FTA likely to deliver its intended results?
5. Are FTA cross-cutting activities relevant and effective?

6. Are FTA institutional arrangements effective and efficient?

These evaluation questions are researched by a combination of methods, including a matching and project characterization analysis, sample case studies, and – in response to FTA’s short timeframe – program theory-based extrapolation of the likelihood for future results. Empirical evidence was gathered through interviews, surveys, field visits, document review and database analysis, and was triangulated and verified in support of the conclusions presented.

The evaluation methodology is described in detail in the Inception Report of this evaluation, which can be downloaded from IEA’s website (<http://iea.cgiar.org>).

Before and during the evaluation, terminology in the CGIAR and in FTA evolved and, in some cases, terms were used without clear definition and with different meanings by different people and in different contexts:

- the terms “Flagship Project” and “Cluster of Activity”, introduced for the interim phase and with view to the second CRP call, are only used in this report when referring to activities and planning for the period after mid-2014, when FTA’s first phase ends. The reason is that the concepts behind these terms differ somewhat from FTA Components and FTA Themes and that these concepts are still evolving;
- the term “component” is used in the same meaning as in the FTA Proposal for each of the 5 principal thematic program segments in FTA. In 2012 and 2013, components were called “themes” in FTA. From mid-2014 onwards, “Flagship Projects” will represent the main programmatic divisions in FTA but may not necessarily refer to the earlier “themes” as they imply a stronger intended focus on few outcomes;
- the term “sub-component” is used to describe the next-layer subdivisions within each component. In the FTA Proposal sub-components were introduced as “themes” but, in 2012 and 2013, were referred to as “sub-themes” in FTA. From mid-2014 onwards, subdivisions of Flagship Projects will be referred to as “Clusters of Activities” but may not necessarily be identical with the former “themes/sub-themes.”

This report is a synthesis report of the main evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The full evaluation report consists of three volumes, and can be downloaded from IEA’s website (<http://iea.cgiar.org>). The first volume presents all evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations in detail. Volume II contains several annexes and volume III summarizes the results of two surveys conducted for this evaluation.

1.2 FTA in the evolving CGIAR

The FTA program evaluated here was approved by the Fund Council on 06 April 2011, and started 3 months later on 01 July 2011. FTA is led by The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and includes three additional CGIAR Centers (the World Agroforestry Centre -ICRAF-, Bioversity International, and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture - CIAT) as well as two non-CGIAR Participant Institutions (the Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement – CIRAD - and the Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza - CATIE).

FTA is a ten-year multi-partner program to be implemented within the Strategy and Results Framework (SRF) and along the rules and regulations of the reformed CGIAR. The first phase of FTA covers the period from July 2011 through June 2014 with an initial USD 233 million three-year budget that includes a USD 90 million contribution from the CGIAR’s programmatic funding windows 1 and 2.

Table 1. FTA Annual Budget in USD million (FTA, 2011).

	2011 (July- December)	2012	2013	2014 (January - June)	Total
Window 1 and 2	13	28	33	17	90
Bilateral (including Window 3)	21	45	50	26	142
Total	34	73	83	43	233
Share of Window 1 and 2	37%	38%	39%	40%	39%

FTA is a program with distributed governance and decentralized management that is governed, managed and implemented by its Participant Institutions and their partners. FTA is represented towards the CGIAR Consortium Board and Office by its current Lead Center, CIFOR. The Lead Center also holds legal and fiduciary responsibility for FTA *vis-à-vis* the Consortium Board and hosts the FTA Director and the Management Support Unit (MSU).

FTA aims to enhance the management and use of forests, agroforestry and tree genetic resources across the landscape, from forests to farms and plantations, and strives to become the leading global comparative research initiative focused on forestry, agroforestry and tree diversity across the developing world as a vehicle for delivering on relevant aspects of the SRF. The research activities are organized along five principal program components:

1. smallholder production systems and markets;
2. management and conservation of forest and tree resources;
3. landscape management for environmental services, biodiversity conservation and livelihoods;
4. climate change adaptation and mitigation; and
5. impacts of trade and investment on forests and people.

The main goal of **Component 1** is to inform a new global understanding of the potential for smallholder and community forests to enhance the wellbeing of the rural poor. Within FTA, Component 1 in particular intends to call the attention of practitioners, academics and policy makers to key issues and approaches in agroforestry and related land use systems, which can be useful to address the complex environmental and productivity problems of degraded agricultural lands throughout the world.

The overarching goal of **Component 2** is to increase the likelihood that important forest and tree resources will be available for future generations while – in parallel – improving the well-being of the poor, who are dependent on these resources for their livelihoods. The focus is on developing and testing new forest and tree management practices at a level of the forest management unit, and for tree populations across the forest to farm gradient.

Component 3 aims to understand the drivers of forest transition as a prerequisite for their management, to understand the consequences of the forest transition for environmental goods, services and livelihoods, and to enhance response and policy options to sustain and maximize environmental and social benefits from multi-functional landscapes.

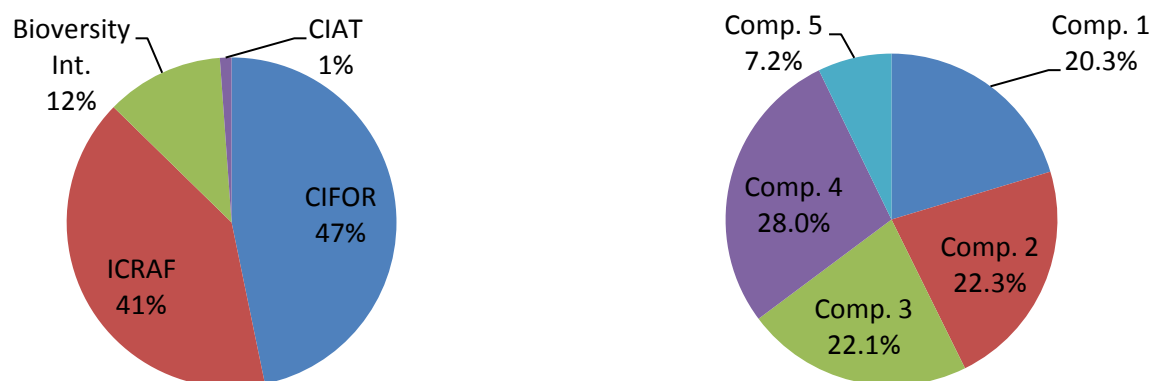
The overall objective of **Component 4** is to contribute to the development of new global and national forest-and-climate regimes and subnational initiatives related to climate change, forests and trees in ways that ensure that they are effective, efficient and equitable. The resulting outcomes are intended to contribute to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and augmenting carbon stocks through better management of forest - and tree-based resources while increasing local and societal resilience through forest-, agroforestry - and tree-based adaptation measures.

Finally, the overall objective of **Component 5** is to contribute to reducing the negative impacts and enhancing the positive impacts of global and regional trade and investment on forests and forest-dependent communities through contributing to major shifts in forest-related trade and investment patterns.

The three-year budget allocated to activities in the five program components amounts to USD 220 million, or 95 percent of the overall budget. The remaining 5 percent, or USD 13 million, is reserved for program support and cross-cutting activities¹. Without taking into account program support and cross-cutting activities, the FTA Proposal budget is distributed across Centers and program components and across Centers as summarized in Figure 1.

¹ The FTA Proposal budgets presented in this section are consistent with the program implementation contracts between the Fund Council and the Consortium (“Consortium Performance Agreement under the CGIAR Fund - CRP6,” 2011), the Consortium and FTA Lead Center (CGIAR, 2011a), and the FTA Lead Center and ICRAF, Bioversity International, and CIAT (CGIAR Research Program 6, 2011; CGIAR Research Program, 2012, 2011a, 2011b).

Figure 1: FTA three-year Center and program component budgets, not including program coordination and cross-cutting activities, 100 percent = USD 220 million.



In addition to the program components, the FTA Proposal introduced several cross-cutting and support activities: **Sentinel Landscapes** (an approach aimed to provide a framework for comparative analysis at multiple scales over long times), **Gender-responsive research, capacity development, communication and knowledge-sharing**, and **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Impact Assessment (MEIA)**.

1.3 FTA theory of change

FTA's theory of change still appears under-developed. The FTA **results framework** – while very detailed in parts – is concrete and specific only on the most granular level. Here, output targets are backed up by indicators that mostly fulfill SMART² criteria. Beyond this, FTA objectives lose specificity both with increasing aggregation from individual projects to sub-components, components and to the entire program and along the results chain from activities to outputs, outcomes and impacts. While FTA has defined, laudably, outcome targets, the corresponding indicators do not fulfill SMART criteria, and outcome objectives at more aggregate levels describe categories rather than targets and remain altogether unspecific. Overall, FTA's results framework appears constructed bottom-up instead of top-down. Rather than logically deducing outcomes, outputs and activities from clearly defined overall objectives, FTA displays detailed categories of activity and output that are iteratively aggregated and explained as contributing to higher-level results.

In addition to the above results framework, FTA invested considerable efforts into conceptualizing **impact pathways** of cause and effect along which the entire program, and each of its components and cross-cutting activities, is anticipated to eventually contribute to intended impacts. The FTA Proposal itself goes into considerable detail in conceptualizing

² SMART is an acronym for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

planned activities and their intended effects. More recently, FTA renewed its efforts to further conceptualize impact pathways along program components, for cross-cutting activities, and for the program as a whole. Moderated by FTA's MEIA Team, graphical impact pathways for FTA Components and the program as a whole were further developed. All impact pathways, both those on the program level and those on the level of components and cross-cutting activities, are based on statements of intermediate results that are grouped and ordered in a logical progression. The impact pathways do not attempt to explain individual cause-effect relationships, and do not go into detail on how to progress from one group of intermediate results to the next. Mechanisms, tools and approaches, underlying assumptions, and their realism are not detailed. Hence, the practical value of these exercises remains limited as they stay conceptual and provide only limited information and practical guidance. FTA's MEIA Team was well aware of these shortcomings, and clearly considered the current set of impact pathways and the present results framework as work in progress towards a more integrated, concrete, and empirically founded theory of change.

The impact pathways and the results framework have not yet been integrated with each other and are not yet further developed into a full FTA **theory of change**. The Evaluation Team is concerned about the fact that there are not yet any clear indications of how and when this will happen, and when a comprehensive theory of change for FTA will be available, which can serve as strategy and management tool for FTA and exert tangible influence on strategic planning and project selection mechanisms in FTA Centers.

Moreover, the FTA leadership group perceived the impact pathway exercise and, to a lesser extent the development of the results framework, as an important step in ensuring FTA's continued financial survival in the reformed CGIAR. Interviewees expressed that a causal connection needed to be demonstrated to the CGIAR Consortium Board and Office in order to be eligible for future funding. As a consequence, the Evaluation Team finds that the focus of FTA's work towards a realistic and strong theory of change is skewed towards conceptualizing highly aggregated outcomes and impacts far beyond the direct influence of the program, at the expense of establishing the basis for a realistic results-based management framework within FTA's sphere of influence.

2 Relevance and comparative advantage

2.1 Global relevance

The Evaluation Team finds that FTA's overall objectives are highly relevant, especially from the global public goods perspective. The objectives of program components and cross-cutting activities such as Sentinel Landscapes and Gender are also relevant. Overall, there is strong demand for a program like FTA and for the research carried out by FTA Participant Institutions.

FTA's intended outcomes and impacts are aligned with the SRF vision, which again supports the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) dealing with halving hunger and poverty (MDG1), and achieving greater environmental sustainability including overcoming land degradation (MDG7). The Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) presented ten forest-related targets to be integrated into the set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will replace the MDGs. The review of forest-related international agreements and negotiations³ suggests that FTA is operating in relevant fields and addressing the thematic priorities of these processes. FTA is well positioned to provide needed information to help with the implementation of key global programs.⁴

Surveyed boundary partners directly involved in FTA projects overwhelmingly found FTA research results to be relevant for their organization and felt that their home organizations could benefit in various complementary ways from research outputs produced by FTA Participant Institutions. The international and regional organizations interviewed shared an overall positive view on the quality and general relevance of FTA research, but sometimes raised concerns about usability of FTA research. FTA's focus on the landscape approach is seen as relevant by interviewees from both groups. Many of the interviewed global boundary partners, such as the World Bank, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), promote the landscape approach in their own work at different levels. They will increasingly require landscape-related research information, for example on economic trade-offs between different uses, and on cost-effective technologies for landscape restoration.

³ Such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and related Bonn Challenge, the United Nation Forum on Forests (UNFF) and non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (NLBI).

⁴ Such as the 2002 Forests Strategy and draft Forests and Trees in Sustainable Landscapes Action Plan of the World Bank, the GEF-5 Focal Area Strategies, FAO's Strategic Objectives and related global goals for forests and forestry, the IUCN Forest and Climate Change Programme, the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan, the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR), and the existing decisions within the UNFCCC and the ongoing negotiations and partial agreement towards a new climate agreement which should be finalized in 2015.

National partners and beneficiaries commonly see FTA research as relevant addressing current needs of a range of stakeholders. However, concerns were raised in some countries that FTA's in-country research does not pay adequate attention to building national research capacity, and that it is not adequately integrated with the national research strategies and development agendas. Despite the overall positive comments about the relevance of FTA research, global and regional partners also expressed concerns that the relevance suffers too often from the "case study approach", and also from being too theoretical and "high level". Concerns were also expressed that too much emphasis is being put on REDD+ research, leaving other important areas with less attention. This "bias" in the current FTA portfolio possibly reflects the situation that funding opportunities may be overly driving the research agenda.

The Evaluation Team also finds that FTA objectives clearly cater to most common Intermediate Development Outcomes (IDOs) and can easily be interpreted to make some contribution to all. Naturally, FTA objectives also contribute to all FTA IDOs as they were constructed with this fit in mind. FTA IDOs can also easily be mapped to common IDOs: most FTA IDOs correspond to a single common IDO and some to more than one. The Evaluation Team acknowledges this conceptual fit and – in principle – the ensuing relevance of FTA within the present framework of the reformed CGIAR. This is however mostly due to the generic, much-encompassing nature of IDOs. It is difficult to imagine work implemented by any of the FTA Participant Institutions for which no conceptual bridge can be built to one or more IDOs. Clearly, more specificity is required for IDOs before these can serve as more than general directions.

Many of the research challenges and opportunities related to forests, trees and agroforestry are linked to each other. Research that can address the ensuing inter-related research questions requires a holistic, integrated approach and a broad range of expertise that goes beyond what any single FTA Participant can provide in isolation. Therefore, it is important to combine the comparative advantages of the FTA Participant Institutions under a single programmatic framework.

Geographically, FTA works largely in relevant areas. The research focuses on biodiversity hotspots, areas under deforestation and degradation threats and with ongoing deforestation and degradation and also on the most impoverished regions of the world. Based on somewhat sketchy spending data per country, FTA may exhibit a spending bias towards South-East Asia in general and Indonesia in specific. Slightly related, in the case of CIFOR, there also appears to be a bias towards moist forests.

Although FTA objectives and research agenda are in line with the main trends in the sector, there are some gaps or weaker areas in addressing the key challenges and opportunities as understood by "the global forestry community" as described in detail in the Inception Report to this evaluation, and reflected in the various forest-related agreements, negotiation processes and international initiatives. Some core areas of sustainable forest

management dealing with resource assessment, silvicultural methods, harvesting and planted forest development, do not appear to receive adequate attention. This is an issue as there is demand also for this type of research, which is an opportunity for FTA to step in.

FTA is strong in addressing directly forest-related challenges but weaker in dealing with extra-sectoral issues related (for example, to energy, private sector, agriculture, and water as well as land tenure), and in identifying action and mechanisms for addressing cross-sectoral issues. This was highlighted by many of the interviewed global and regional partners and also by CIFOR management, but it still needs strengthening. The landscape approach can partly help to deal with these cross-sectoral linkages, but concrete implementation remains somewhat unclear as discussed in this report.

In relation to the emerging set of SDGs and its likely forest-related targets, and recent international initiatives, including the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20, the FTA research portfolio does not yet truly incorporate ideas from a “green economy” orientation. Far from suggesting this still vaguely defined framework as a silver bullet to the world’s struggle to balance poverty with natural resource objectives, in order to study pathways for sustainable growth, the Evaluation Team highlights the need for FTA to address economic factors such as employment and income at a scale beyond livelihoods improvements.

Recommendation 1. The Evaluation Team recommends that FTA’s program and component-level objectives continue to be pursued programmatically because of their high global relevance. Several adjustments must be made to address emerging research themes, ensure better integration of forestry issues into the broader development agendas, and better balance current research priorities geographically.

This recommendation is addressed to:

- the Fund Council, the Consortium Board and their offices, the FTA Lead Center and its Board, and all other FTA Participant Institutions.

Key elements (“must have’s”):

- FTA is continued as a program and continues to receive funding from the CGIAR programmatic funding windows 1 and 2.
- FTA further increases its research focus on:
 - Africa as a whole (i.e. less relative spending on South East Asia after verification of country spending data), and dry zones everywhere in the developing world;
 - transformational change in the “green economy” context, addressing economic factors linked to a low carbon economy and the delivery of environmental services;
 - extra-sectoral drivers of deforestation and forest degradation e.g. linked to agriculture sector, including sustainable production and consumption supply chains, and opportunities related in particular to water and bio-energy; and
 - linking this research more effectively to those development agendas – often

beyond the forest sector - appropriate for each component.

2.2 Component structure and thematic focus

FTA's component structure is found to be straightforward and reasonably logical. It mirrors the Lead Center's research domains and blends in well with ICRAFs science domain matrix structure, and therefore minimizes interface issues. In terms of representing an efficient way to logically organize work within FTA, the present component structure seems to represent one good option among several: 89 percent (N=176) of surveyed FTA researchers felt that the five principal FTA components were a useful way to organize FTA research, and 50 percent (N=143) felt that they were not better or worse than other ways to divvy up FTA research. During interviews, several options to change fundamentally the present component structure have surfaced, but did not represent majority opinions when tested with FTA researchers. The Evaluation Team concurs that there is currently no need to alter fundamentally FTA's present component structure.

Across components, tenure is a research subject of central importance and deserves additional highlighting. The Evaluation Team also finds each component generally relevant with respect to its objectives and research activities. For each component, scientific content and scope can be adjusted to further increase relevance.

Component 1 (smallholder production systems and markets) addresses issues of rural poverty and malnutrition, linked with ecosystem degradation, in some of the poorest countries of the tropical world. The research projects reviewed in this component focus on contributing to internationally agreed objectives of reducing rural poverty and improving nutrition and health by promoting land uses that are compatible with the sustainable management of natural resources, and contribute to conservation of indigenous genetic resources. These objectives respond to urgent needs in rural development and environmental issues in developing countries worldwide.

The Evaluation Team found that more focus needs to be placed on economically (commercially) and environmentally sustainable medium-size agroforestry, related market and policy research, and value chain developments. In addition, silvopastoral systems' research is underrepresented *vis-à-vis* its potential to contribute to sustainable development. While some Component 1 projects promote the use of fodder species in cattle smallholder production systems, there needs to be increased emphasis on silvopastoral systems research to include expanded use of fodder trees and shrubs along with improved pasture species and trees for fruit, timber and other products in medium-scale silvopastoral systems, with cattle adapted to the specific agroecological conditions of target locations.

Component 2 (management and conservation of forest and tree resources) research targets the conservation, domestication and use of less-known species and other genetic

resources for sustainable use, management and conservation of forest resources. The research agenda focuses on strategies to alleviate pressure on forests, as well as on developing and improving techniques to enhance forest regeneration and restore abandoned lands, while fostering interactions with local policy makers to promote and maintain specific activities at local and regional scales. Research objectives in this component are highly relevant considering the overall CGIAR system-level objectives for sustainable natural resource management and improving livelihoods of the rural poor, especially when applied in some of the most impoverished regions and countries in Africa and in the Amazon.

The Evaluation Team finds that research geared and utilized towards influencing international negotiations and policies on biodiversity is underrepresented in Component 2. For example, there is significant potential in helping to further shape the role of forests, trees and agroforestry in the context of the CBD which is not addressed. Component 2 research on forest management does not yet sufficiently cover forest resource assessment, forest silviculture, and the development of forest management models that balance social, environmental and economic aspects. Most of the research currently being conducted under Component 2 focuses on few selected species, therefore the Evaluation Team recommends that Component 2 projects expand their focus to cover a larger number of selected species.

Finally, half of the Component 2 projects reviewed would better fit under Components 1 or 3 which may reflect a tendency to “keep projects home”, i.e. in a component led by that institution rather than mapping them to a component led by another institution where they would be more relevant. This has also been observed in other components (e.g. Component 3). This may be facilitated by the fact that Component 2 exhibits slightly blurred boundaries towards Components 1 and 3 with respect to sustainable forest management and biodiversity, as these are relevant research subjects across components.

Component 3 (landscape management for environmental services, biodiversity conservation and livelihoods) deals with issues of high relevance to international policies and strategies for climate change mitigation, food security and rural development in tropical countries worldwide. International processes such as UNFCCC, CBD and UNFF negotiations are promoting land-use strategies which can be used to improve smallholders’ well-being and deliver environmental services beyond carbon sequestration, including water and biodiversity. Their decision-making must be informed by solid scientific understanding of land-use and change patterns, and their impacts on delivery of various social, economic and environmental benefits in different landscapes. Component 3 research helps filling critical information gaps, and has potential to make valuable contributions to the knowledge on forest carbon stocks, other carbon stocks affected by land use, delivery of environmental goods and services, drivers of land use and forest change, as well as food security and livelihoods. Projects reviewed were found to be highly relevant from the perspective of

adding to the body of global knowledge on the above mentioned issues, while also targeting the needs of the local farmers in each of the target countries.

The Evaluation Team finds that further strengthening research on the restoration of degraded lands is relevant. While Component 3 already covers this type of research, there is a need for increased focus on mixed species designs, multi-use native species, and cost-effective approaches and technologies for landscape restoration. The Evaluation Team highlights the importance of community forestry and of communities in managing landscapes. Component 3 is already actively pursuing these topics and must continue and further expand on this.

Component 4 (climate change adaptation and mitigation) accommodates a large number of specific research activities under both the mitigation and adaptation UNFCCC agenda items. There is general international agreement that, in order to be effective, a REDD+ mechanism needs be based on solid scientific understanding of drivers of land-use change, on transparent monitoring and verification procedures as well as on securing positive impacts on biodiversity and livelihoods.

Regarding climate change mitigation, the great majority of projects look at REDD+. Regarding balance, there is too much deforestation-related research at the expense of research on forest degradation and carbon enhancement in terms of their impacts on poverty and their capacity to provide environmental services. The portfolio in mitigation has a strong emphasis at two levels. First, understanding how to break down international (UNFCCC) decisions to the national level and second, analyzing the impacts and requirements for a successful REDD+ from the livelihoods perspective, while the sub-national and global levels are less treated. The Evaluation Team finds that mitigation research that goes beyond REDD+ is underrepresented. Relevant research questions to tackle are how to connect REDD+ with the ongoing discussions relating to Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU), the landscape approach and the green economy approach.

The portfolio on adaptation covers a wide range of topics and shows an even distribution among them. However, the total amount of activities looking at adaptation is far inferior to those on mitigation issues. The adaptation portfolio is geared towards needs at the national level and to impacts at the local level. Although the sub-national level is mentioned in FTA adaptation projects, research activities targeting this level remain rather reduced.

The Evaluation Team finds the current division of research topics between FTA and the CRP on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CAAFS) reasonably complementary, in line with comparative advantages of institutions involved, and useful both for FTA-internal synergies, as well as for connecting to the global discussion on REDD+ that is negotiated as a stand-alone item in the UNFCCC. Hence, no changes to the partition of labor between FTA and CCAFS are recommended.

Component 5 (impacts of trade and investment on forests and people) is relatively small but deals with highly relevant and internationally visible topics in a coherent manner. Component 5 projects have clear objectives and are logically linked to component objectives and impact pathways. However, objectives are phrased in a manner that puts the focus more on mitigation of negative impacts of trade and investment than carrying out strategic research to enhance the potential contribution of FTA activities to economic and social development. Globalization of trade and investment, in particular related to commodities such as oil palm, bioenergy crops, food crops and livestock, are driving deforestation and forest degradation in many parts of the world. Illegal production and trade of forest products also pose major challenges to sustainable forest management in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Component 5 contributes to this central thematic area, and carries out research that serves related policy processes. In Cameroon and the Congo Basin in general, national and regional key actors (e.g. COMIFAC) have expressed high regard for Component 5 research as a source of needed key information. At the same time, while the reviewed projects were regarded relevant by the boundary partners, many partners stated the research findings were, by themselves, not sufficient to develop much needed evidence-based policy options for concrete decision-making, and in particular develop solutions that would advance the development agenda.

The global and regional investment and market developments offer significant opportunities for sustainable and profitable forest and agroforestry production, processing and marketing. There is a huge disparity in investment flows between regions and countries, and between larger operators and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), favoring already better-off countries. FTA could do much more in terms of enhancing the knowledge base on the actual financing flows and identify constraints and actions to enhance responsible private sector investment in developing countries by large companies, SMEs and micro-enterprises, including those operating in the informal sector.

Recommendation 2. The Evaluation Team recommends to better balance research priorities thematically, to adjust component coverage accordingly, and to establish “tenure” as a cross-cutting activity.

This recommendation is addressed to:

- the FTA Steering Committee, the FTA Director, the FTA Lead Center and its Board, and all other FTA Participant Institutions.

Key elements (“must have’s”):

- Component 1 broadens its scope in agroforestry to include silvopastoral systems of different types beyond those limited efforts already in place at the smallholder scale, continues its efforts to improve value-chains and get more engaged with medium scale, more commercially oriented agroforestry, and enlarges its market- and policy-related research.
- Component 2 engages more actively in influencing international negotiations and policies on biodiversity, better addresses various forest management research issues such as resource assessment, forest silviculture, and development of socially, environmentally and financially feasible forest management models, and broadens the coverage of species for genetic conservation. Bioersivity International avoids “keeping projects home”; biodiversity conservation issues must be adequately addressed across all FTA components.
- Component 3 strengthens its already ongoing work on restoration of degraded lands (including reforestation efforts that may involve mixed species designs, focusing on using multiple-use native species and developing new cost-effective approaches and technologies for landscape restoration), further increases its already strong involvement in community forestry with respect to landscapes, and increases its research focus on institutional, administrative and managerial challenges related to implementing the landscape approach in practice.
- Component 4 increases its relative research focus on degradation and carbon enhancement under REDD+, considers items beyond the current REDD+ discussion (including how to connect REDD+ with the starting discussions on AFOLU, the landscape approach and the green economy approach), closely collaborates and coordinates with CCAFS, conducts (to the extent possible in the current funding landscape) relatively more adaptation research, and considers national and subnational frameworks more in adaptation and mitigation research.
- Component 5 strengthens economic analysis and generally pays more attention to economic issues (in addition to social and environmental issues), identifies practicable solutions and evidence-based policy options for advancing investment and trade-related development agendas (such as catalyzing more forestry financing and responsible private sector investments).
- “Tenure” is adopted as a cross-cutting activity in a modality determined by the FTA Director and the FTA Steering Committee.

2.3 Comparative advantage

FTA Centers are seen as global leaders in key scientific domains of FTA research. The most important comparative advantage applying to all the FTA Centers is that they are regarded as neutral world-class scientific research organizations that do not aim to push specific agenda.

ICRAF is perceived as a world leader in agroforestry in general, and on research for rural development; while CIFOR is renowned for its policy-oriented research, early work on forest governance, and promoting the role of forests and trees in food security and livelihood improvement. CIFOR is also regarded as center of excellence in communication and international dissemination of research findings. Bioversity International has a strong global reputation for conservation of forest genetic resources. CIAT has only been marginally involved in FTA to date, but may complement FTA's landscape approach with its crop and pasture expertise, play an important bridging role as CCAFS' Lead Center with related climate change expertise, and provide on-the-ground expertise and presence in Latin America in the future. FTA offers an umbrella under which important additional cooperative growth potential can be realized.

CIFOR and ICRAF demonstrate strong complementarity and significant synergies. FTA offers an umbrella under which important additional cooperative growth potential can be realized. Going forward, the evolution of the institutional mandates of both Centers has to be guided carefully, so as to avoid unnecessary overlap of research agendas and related operational competition, and to realize the existing potentials for more synergies.

These identified comparative advantages are quite consistent with the list of comparative advantages presented in the FTA Proposal which highlight brand name, quality of staff, responsiveness, partnerships, communications strategies, global mandate and local relevance, grounding in local conditions, and experience and track record in global comparative research. Interestingly, this list does not identify scientific neutrality as a comparative advantage although partners at different levels see this as the main advantage of FTA Centers.

The evaluation did not find evidence supporting the claim that FTA Centers would enjoy a comparative advantage in terms of the quality of its research staff *vis-à-vis* other large research institutions such as CSIRO, EFI, other FTA Participant Institutions (CIRAD and CATIE), or some national agriculture and forestry research centers e.g. in Latin America, and especially in universities that are engaged in international research in fields relevant to the FTA. However, as indicated elsewhere in this report, the quality of FTA researchers is good.

Furthermore, FTA Centers do not seem to have a comparative advantage at the national level in communication and dissemination of research results. Naturally, there is variation, but in many countries there are simply more effective national channels for delivering information, and obviously when it comes to the dissemination of research results to the field to the resource managers, national extensions agencies and often also NGOs are better positioned.

Most importantly, FTA Centers do not have a comparative advantage in scaling up. Overall efforts in scaling up projects are only incipient. This was evident during field visits by the Evaluation Team in Kenya, Cameroon, Ethiopia, and Indonesia, where project actions in Components 1, 2 and 3 were concentrated in a few selected locations. FTA Centers appeared to be struggling with outreach, with applying research on the ground at scale, and were having a hard time with designing and implementing ways to contributing to effectively scaling up.

Recommendation 3. The Evaluation Team recommends that all FTA Participant Institutions safeguard their principal comparative advantage of being neutral, world class research institutions, and resist pressures to work outside their areas of comparative advantage. CIFOR and ICRAF must further intensify their already close collaboration to maximize synergies and minimize unnecessary competition.

This recommendation is addressed to:

- all FTA Participant Institutions, including their governing bodies (first part);
- CIFOR and ICRAF, including their BOTs (second part).

Key elements (“must have’s”):

- all FTA Participant Institutions continue to operate within their respective areas of comparative advantage. Increasing pressure towards securing development outcomes is not interpreted as needing to grow in-house downstream extension abilities but, instead, addressed through effective partnerships with global, national and sub-national systems and actors with the necessary development capacities and experiences.
- CIFOR and ICRAF increase joint research planning and fund raising in the context of broader cross-sectoral research programs.
- The current cross-integration of members of CIFOR’s and ICRAF’s Boards of Trustees is continued and intensified.

Further suggestions:

- CIFOR and ICRAF develop joint national research programs of CIFOR and ICRAF with national partners (National Agricultural Research Systems – NARSs- and universities).

3 Quality of science and effectiveness

3.1 Quality of science

The Evaluation Team was pleased with the overall quality of science. FTA is led by a group of accomplished senior scientists. Researchers involved in FTA are on average enthusiastic, committed, productive and highly qualified. While observed individual scientific qualification was usually high, the Evaluation Team found that there is a shortage of strong expertise in economics, financing and quantitative policy analysis in CIFOR and in other Centers, which sometimes results in research that cannot cover important economic and policy dimensions adequately. Economic considerations are naturally very relevant in Component 5, but also in other FTA components, as otherwise there is a risk for producing results which may be technically applicable but not financially feasible. A similar issue seems to exist around for covering tenure-related topics with the necessary senior expertise.

Overall self-assessed working conditions for FTA Center researchers average between neutral and very good. The vast majority of researchers are satisfied with the qualification of peers, mentoring by others, and by the availability and quality of technical equipment and technical support staff. The Evaluation Team was pleased that its own impression of a culture of acceptance for innovative ideas and related risk was shared by the researchers' perceptions. Incentives for cooperation across components, Centers, and with non-CGIAR partners were mostly seen positive. However, when asked a separate open-ended question on how the quality of FTA-related research could be further improved, a third of all respondents (29 of 86 for that question) spontaneously mentioned that collaboration should be increased. This notion of a need to further incentivize and increase collaboration was also suggested during interviews. Feedback along several other dimensions differed between interviews and surveys. While the FTA leadership group felt that FTA represented a significant burden in terms of non-research related activity, such as increased number of meeting and reporting requirements, researchers themselves were on average evenly split between satisfaction and dissatisfaction, with only a small minority expressing strong views in either direction. This was confirmed when analyzing the survey responses of the FTA leadership group separately, yielding significantly lower satisfaction ratings for these questions: three quarters in that group were dissatisfied with the share of time for FTA-related administration and reporting, and about two thirds were dissatisfied with the time they could allocate to research. No significant differences were found when separately analyzing survey feedback for different components or different institutions.

FTA-related research has led to more than 1 400 publications in 2011-2013, half of which are journal articles of which 80 percent appeared in ISI-listed journals.

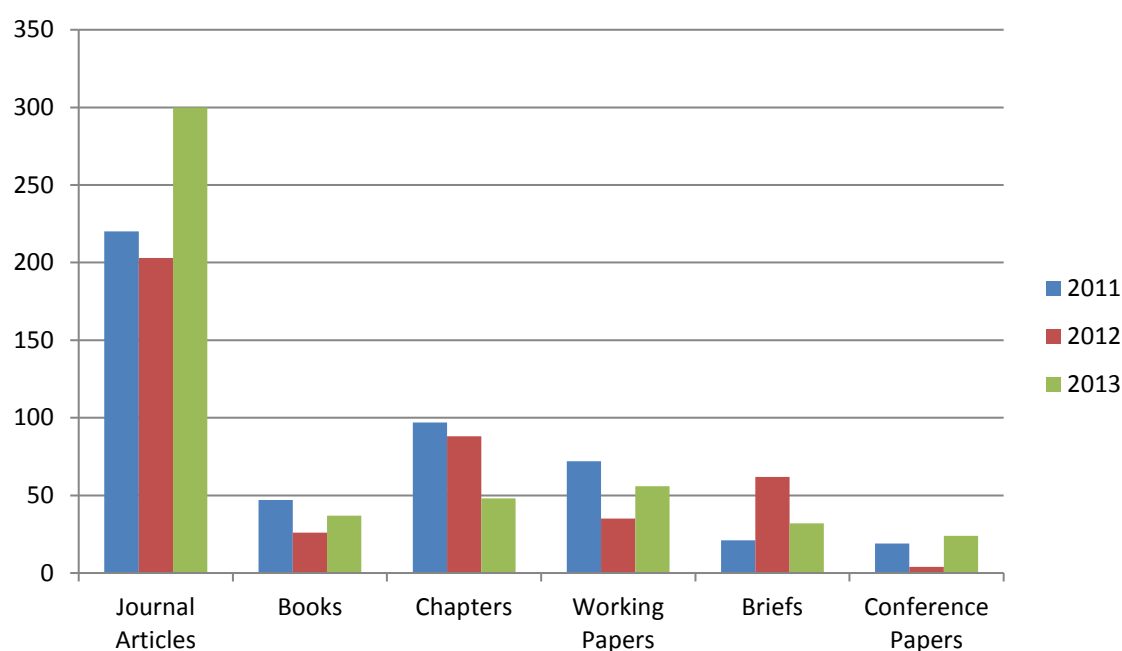
A good balance is kept between peer-reviewed journal articles and other publications, with access to critical target audiences in mind. Working conditions for FTA scientists seem

satisfactory to good and adequate *ex-ante* and *ex-post* quality assurance processes appear to be in place.

Surveyed boundary partners expressed very high levels of satisfaction with various aspects related to the quality of scientific work done in the past by FTA Participant Institutions.

This was put somehow into perspective by interviewees from more than 20 international or regional organizations of strategic importance for FTA, who agreed on overall good scientific quality of FTA outputs but sometimes questioned their relevance and applicability.

Figure 2. FTA-related publication record as obtained from the FTA MSU.



3.2 Effectiveness

For individual projects, FTA has demonstrated overall good performance with respect to achieving planned outputs, and research projects have been implemented professionally and diligently. While projects have usually delivered (or are likely to deliver) outcomes that are in their direct control, performance in terms of delivering outcomes that go beyond the project itself appears less satisfactory.

Aggregated along entire program components, reported performance in reaching output-level targets defined in FTA's results framework is mixed: on average, 80 percent of output targets were fully reached, with strong fluctuations between components. Some of the performance in reaching output targets is related to reporting rather than performance issues as discussed in Section 5.2.

Table 2. FTA Performance vis-à-vis output targets, in percent of targets.

Component	Jan- Dec 2012			Jan- Dec 2013			Completed as planned
1	93.8%	6.3%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	Partially completed
2	71.4%	23.8%	4.8%	61.1%	38.9%	0.0%	Not expected anymore
3	80.2%	19.8%	0.0%	92.9%	7.1%	0.0%	
4	55.0%	42.5%	2.5%	59.6%	38.3%	2.1%	
5	79.2%	16.7%	4.2%	61.5%	38.5%	0.0%	
Overall	77.6%	21.0%	1.4%	79.5%	19.9%	0.6%	

On the level of component outcomes, FTA does not systematically track performance. Nevertheless, from the Evaluation Teams review of effectiveness along FTA components that is detailed in the main evaluation report, two important conclusions can be drawn across components.

First, driven to a large degree by bilateral project funding, the overall FTA research portfolio does not yet demonstrate strong synergies between projects, and shows inadequate collective alignment towards FTA objectives. Instead, a large part of the FTA research portfolio consists of individual and often unrelated projects. New project proposals are frequently not integrated into FTA's results framework.

Regarding bilaterally funded research, the Evaluation Team could not observe how FTA objectives and priorities would directly influence the decision to apply for funding, the design and focus of the project proposals, the negotiations resulting in a grant agreement, and progress reporting back to the bilateral donor. All of these activities appear to happen largely as they would have happened in the absence of FTA. Instead, the content and focus of projects appears to be driven primarily by two factors: the strategies, priorities and preferences of bilateral donors and those of FTA Participant Institutions implementing the projects, putting into question FTA's ability to align and focus research across projects, components, and over longer periods of time, on its program objectives. In its assessment of 100 proposals and grant agreements of FTA projects that started after the program became operational, the Evaluation Team could not discern a clear trend towards integration of those projects into the framework of FTA.

Second, increasing the likelihood for FTA research to contribute to large scale development outcomes remains a challenge:

- along impact pathways aiming to adopt technologies, information or germplasm, the Evaluation Team could often not identify a convincing rationale for how pilot-scale achievements would drive further up or out-scaling, and there is too much reliance on the assumption that well-documented and widely disseminated case studies or research results would, by themselves, become effective drivers of replication, adoption, and further applied research;
- along pathways aiming to influence national and international policy, the Evaluation Team is concerned about the feedback received from international and regional institutions of strategic importance for FTA. In most cases, FTA was not known as a program at all and, more importantly, the degree to which these institutions valued, had used or had otherwise been influenced by earlier outputs from FTA Centers, was moderate. Several interviewees from these institutions felt that they had better sources of scientific insight, and many shared the view that while they were aware of and valued the contributions of FTA Centers, their own work had only been marginally influenced by it.

With limited options and capacity to drive adoption, the degree to which favorable conditions for adoption and application are already in place must be added as a factor in choosing research locations and topics. Research products must also be designed based on their usability, as perceived by those who are expected to use them. Overall, a good balance needs to be found between the historical focus of supplying findings with the intent to drive development, and a new focus of driving the research agenda directly by the needs of development partners.

Hence, FTA needs to considerably strengthen the management of its research portfolio. Greater attention needs to be applied when mapping projects to FTA as to their fit with the program, and Window 1 and 2 funds must be used exclusively for FTA purposes, including for co-financing bilateral grants if a value-adding argument exists. A number of underlying constraints needs to be understood and addressed for this. FTA's results framework and impact pathways need to be strengthened, concretized and aligned and program and Center strategies and priorities need to be harmonized. In addition, as addressed later in this report, important accountabilities of FTA Participant Institutions towards bilateral project donors - that fund the lion's share of FTA's project portfolio - need to be acknowledged and FTA governance needs to be enabled to drive active FTA portfolio management with adequate balance of all shareholders.

Recommendation 4. The Evaluation Team recommends that FTA further develops its results framework and impact pathways into a comprehensive theory of change, and a framework for results-based management that explicitly acknowledges windows for opportunistic and blue-sky research. Based on this framework, FTA must then initiate active management of its entire research portfolio, including increased selectivity with regard to mapping bilaterally funded projects to the program.

This recommendation is addressed to:

- the FTA Steering Committee, the FTA Director, and the Lead Center BOT;
- the Consortium Board and Office for inclusion into guidance for FTA during the interim phase (until end of 2016) and for the second CRP call.

Key points (“must have’s”):

- FTA’s theory of change is further developed to clarify pathways from research to large-scale adoption and development impact. Underlying assumptions especially regarding boundary partners are clearly stated and verified. Objectives in FTA’s theory of change are deduced from overall CGIAR objectives and from partner needs, rather than interpreting how present activities cater to these objectives and needs.
- The MEIA team is equipped with sufficient capacity to conduct this type of research and impact pathway research is made a FTA research topic
- Development of a two-tier results framework, within and beyond FTA’s sphere of control, based on:
 - a series of early outcome targets *attributable* to FTA activities and *monitorable* in the sense that their achievement can be tracked by relevant and easy-to-measure indicators;
 - aggregate and long-term objectives on the level of FTA components (or Flagship Projects) to which early outcome targets make *plausible contributions*.
- Two windows of research that go beyond a narrowly defined Results-Based Management (RBM) approach are established:
 - Opportunistic research, driven by the availability of significant bilateral donor funding and contributing to overall FTA objectives (but not directly to short-term RBM targets);
 - Innovative, high-risk research that cannot be fit into a results-based logic but that exhibits high relevance and potential for FTA.
- This framework must be developed and maintained in continued alignment with institutional strategies and priorities of all FTA Participant Institutions.
- This framework guides priority setting and active research portfolio management by the Steering Committee and the FTA Director.
- For FTA’s second phase, performance is measured by results. Hence, no fixed bilateral funding shares are predetermined.

The idea to generally orient research in the CGIAR towards a set of development outcomes, which the system as a whole attempts to achieve, was a central driver for the CGIAR reform and a cornerstone of current plans under the SRF. While the Evaluation Team fully endorses a strengthened orientation towards development results, FTA's results framework must remain realistic. Only near-term, early development outcomes are monitorable across the entire program, and attributable to FTA research activities.

On the contrary, more aggregate and long-term objectives on the level of FTA components (or Flagship Projects) cannot be monitored across the entire FTA research portfolio and cannot be attributed to FTA research activities. Here, results-based management in the narrow sense is not applicable, and results-oriented management must involve critical examination and verification of the logical coherence and the validity of the assumptions (impact hypotheses), underlying the pathways that connect early outcome results with long-term development objectives, for example by selected *ex-ante* and *ex-post* impact evaluation, contribution analysis, expert advice, and other methods.

Recommendation 4 also provides the mechanism for focusing FTA research activities. Earlier recommendations (recommendations 1 and 2) have increased, rather than reduced, the areas FTA research is recommended to cover. The introduction of early-outcome targets (recommendation 4) now allows concentrating research around a suitable number of those targets in order to keep the overall research activity volume in line with capacities and funding.

4 Cross-cutting activities

4.1 Sentinel Landscapes

The Sentinel Landscapes concept has high relevance and holds great promise to produce much-needed, comparable long-term datasets of socioeconomic and biophysical changes along the forest transition curve. FTA has chosen and established data protocols for nine Sentinel Landscapes, seven covering specific geographies and two specific topics. The selection of sites was sometimes difficult and delayed, as FTA Participants preferred different sites in the context of their own work.

Currently, the integration of Sentinel Landscapes with other research appears challenging. Project teams and donors operating within Sentinel Landscapes have not been easy to convince to adhere to data collection protocols defined by the FTA Sentinel Landscape Team. For successful implementation, it is also critical to ensure the involvement of partners as key actors that should be part of these decisions. Hence, while Sentinel Landscapes enjoy excellent technical leadership, more scientific leadership is needed to motivate researchers across FTA.

The Evaluation Team is particularly concerned that the needed support for Sentinel Landscapes on the donor side has not yet materialized. Unrestricted FTA funds dedicated to Sentinel Landscapes are insufficient to guarantee ongoing tracking of even a core set of indicators over many years. By their very definition, the ecoregional public goods produced by this type of research only materialize if uninterrupted long term data collection under the same protocol is guaranteed, which requires sufficient and uninterrupted funding and support. Therefore, the present set of Sentinel Landscapes is in a sort of a limbo, attempting to secure bilateral funding or to leverage or piggy-back on other research efforts.

Recommendation 5. As part of the preparations for FTA’s second phase proposal, the Evaluation Team recommends that the FTA Steering Committee re-assesses the relevance and the financial sustainability of the current set of Sentinel Landscapes, and adapt the entire approach to Sentinel Landscapes in the FTA Phase II Proposal accordingly.

This recommendation is addressed to:

- the FTA Steering Committee, the FTA Director, and the Lead Center BOT.

Key points (“must have’s”):

- Strong scientific leadership is needed in order to increase the researchers’ engagement in the pursuit of SL objectives.
- Sentinel Landscapes are integrated into FTA’s overall theory of change and FTA research is increasingly associated with these sites.
- “Business cases” are formulated balancing minimal resource and support requirements (both international and by the host countries) to successfully operate Sentinel Landscapes over a period long enough to generate valuable long-term tracking data and balancing these with realistic assumptions about funding levels and stability and continued support in the CGIAR.
- The FTA Steering Committee, after being restructured (see recommendation 10), reviews the SL concept and operational plans to balance the value of expected results with operational requirements and likely future support.

4.2 Gender

The need for a consistent and coherent integration of gender aspects into research in natural resource management is well documented since more than two decades, and corresponds to donor priorities. In the CGIAR, however, Gender has not always been addressed satisfactorily in the past and various external reviews provided mixed results on how Gender had been incorporated in FTA Centers’ work.

At pre-proposal stage, FTA received positive feedback on how Gender was planned to be treated. A 2010 scoping study aimed to help the CGIAR in its efforts for mainstreaming gender across the CRPs considered that the FTA Proposal integrated Gender in a “original and effective way” into research (Kauck et al., 2010, p. 10). In implementation practice, however, the Evaluation Team obtained rather mixed results. On the one hand, Gender was

found to be visibly integrated into only 45 percent of project proposals (N=100), while more than half did not really mention Gender at all. In addition, no clear trend towards increased gender mainstreaming in project proposals over time is visible, not even for projects with start dates as late as 2013, which is well after FTA had become operational. On the other hand, 14 of 16 sample case studies conducted for this evaluation delivered (or plan to deliver) Gender data in some form, and have any type of gender activities included.

FTA's 2013 Gender strategy proposes clear objectives and impact pathways, explains the corresponding approaches, identifies Gender-relevant scientific questions for each FTA component and defines initial indicators for monitoring progress and success. The strategy is also in line with the CGIAR Gender strategy.

However, the strategy does not sufficiently cover social diversity, and does not provide advice on how to assess and deal with limited scalability of approaches to Gender. It must also incorporate more lessons learned from the "Systemwide Program on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis" (PRGA).

Recommendation 6. The Evaluation Team recommends updating the FTA Gender strategy to better cover social diversity, scalability of findings, and earlier lessons learned. The FTA Steering Committee must monitor the degree to which gender-sensitive research is mainstreamed in FTA and take corrective action if Gender mainstreaming remains stagnant by year-end 2015.

This recommendation is addressed to:

- the FTA Steering Committee, the FTA Director, and the FTA Gender team.

Key points ("must have's"):

- The Gender strategy is updated with respect to a stronger inclusion of social diversity, scalability of gender-related findings, and incorporation of lessons learned from the PRGA.
- Gender mainstreaming is monitored among other by tracking the share of new research proposals with explicit elements of gender-sensitive research in their work plans and objectives. If no significant improvement of Gender coverage in FTA research is evident by year-end 2015, the Steering Committee oversees a thorough review of underlying issues and takes follow-up action.

4.3 Partnerships

FTA itself recognizes the importance of connecting the program firmly to its boundary partners, and to place the entire program and its components into the larger and complex network of processes and actors involved in development issues around forests, trees and agroforestry, and into the context of other relevant research.

Within an increased focus on outcomes, FTA researchers have begun to identify relevant boundary partners for each FTA Component. While the FTA Proposal itself lists an impressive number of exemplary partners, little central attention was visible to the Evaluation Team to how this complex network of relationship and partnership building is driven, coordinated and managed for FTA as a program. FTA could not, for example, provide a comprehensive list of existing boundary partners. Therefore, the Evaluation Team is concerned that the implementation of FTA research along impact pathways, with a focus on development outcomes, is still in a nascent stage.

Existing project-level partnerships and partnership networks, established by some country and regional offices of FTA Participant Institutions, seemed well-justified and generally value-adding. Surveyed FTA researchers were optimistic that principal boundary partners of their projects would use or otherwise apply the research findings in their work: 37 percent felt that the influence would be decisive, 58 percent that it would be moderate, and only 5 percent expressed doubts that there would be any influence⁵. This positive projection is mirrored by the surveyed boundary partners themselves, commenting on past influences through the work of FTA Participant Institutions: 34 percent indicated decisive influence, 61 percent moderate influence, and 4 percent negligible influence⁶. Asked to back up these statements with concrete examples, boundary partners were generally able to provide convincing descriptions of how research findings had indeed been incorporated into and advanced their own work, had helped in decision-making or had provided necessary evidence that allowed advocating and advancing the boundary partner's cause⁷.

The very positive self-assessment of boundary partner involvement by FTA researchers and current FTA project boundary partners was not matched by a series of interviews the Evaluation Team conducted with more than 20 international or regional organizations of strategic importance for FTA.

In most cases FTA was not perceived or known at all as a program in which the work on forests, trees, and agroforestry of six FTA Participant Institutions and their partners is aligned and coordinated. Moreover, also the degree to which these institutions valued, had

⁵ N=163. See question 19 in the FTA researcher survey, volume III. Percentages have been calculated without non-respondents and not counting respondents having selected "don't know".

⁶ N=67. See question 16 in the boundary partner survey, volume III. Percentages have been calculated without non-respondents and not counting respondents having selected "don't know", "Our cooperation is too recent, no influence is visible yet," or "Other".

⁷ N=64. See open-ended question 17 in the boundary partner survey, volume III.

used or had otherwise been influenced by outputs from FTA Centers was painting a considerably less enthusiastic picture than the survey and interview feedback received from FTA scientists and project-level boundary partners⁸. Several interviewees from the above institutions felt that they had better sources of scientific findings and many shared the view that while they were aware of and valued work by the FTA Centers, their own work had only marginally been influenced by it.

To the Evaluation Team, the latter findings are of concern. While general optimism of FTA researchers towards the quality and effectiveness of their boundary partner involvement is laudable and mirrored by the surveyed group of established FTA boundary partners, significant issues regarding the relevance and usability of FTA research results exist beyond this circle.

FTA donors are not included into FTA's partnership framework. While FTA Participant Institutions entertain separate relationships to their bilateral donors, no program-level relationship between FTA and its Window 2 donors seems to exist. It seems of utter importance to work towards further alignment of all FTA donors and to rally further program-level support. FTA also remains little known in the wider development arena, especially *vis-à-vis* a number of relevant global and regional players, and to its bilateral project donors. The latter clearly stands in the way of increased programmatic alignment of all FTA donors.

Recommendation 7. The Evaluation Team recommends that FTA increases and makes more systematic its efforts to reach out to and involve partners on all levels: program donors, relevant actors of strategic importance for FTA, and boundary partners. FTA must further increase its efforts to include boundary partners into research priority setting, design, and implementation, develop their capacity, and ensure that FTA results targets respond to concrete needs of development partners.

This recommendation is addressed to:

- the FTA Steering Committee and the FTA Director.

Key points (“must have’s”):

- FTA convenes a joint meeting of (or otherwise works towards aligning) its Window 2 and principal Window 1 donors and principal bilateral donors to increase programmatic coherence and to rally overall program funding.
- FTA develops and implements an action plan to identify, reach out to, and identify the concrete needs of partners of strategic importance and key boundary partners for FTA research as a basis for further driving an outcome-oriented approach to

⁸ Surveyed project-level boundary partners represent a mix of subnational, national and international institutions and platforms. See question 6 of the boundary partner survey in volume III of this report for more detail.

research (recommendation 3). Care is taken to remain strategic in partner selection in view of the growing number of partnerships.

- FTA ensures that critical capacities of key boundary partners are developed to enable successful uptake of FTA research.
- In promoting FTA to its partners it is important to not create a false impression of FTA “replacing” its Centers and non-CGIAR partners but rather to highlight the integrative function FTA provides in aligning and coordinating the work of its constituting institutions

4.4 Capacity development

Capacity Development plays an important role throughout FTA, and capacity constraints and gaps are widespread among FTA boundary partners.

Among the three Centers most invested in FTA, ICRAF demonstrated the most advanced and established approach to capacity development that has recently been updated, as summarized in a comprehensive strategy (World Agroforestry Centre, 2013). ICRAF’s earlier technical capacity building capacities were spun off in the 1990s as a self-sustaining NGO (African Network for Agriculture and Forestry Education) that continues to be housed at ICRAF, and is, among other, contracted by ICRAF projects to provide capacity development services to ICRAF. While addressing capacity development in its earlier strategies, CIFOR is only now in the process of operationalizing a central approach to capacity development. Current projects are pretty much on their own with designing, implementing and evaluating capacity development interventions since no professional support structure as in ICRAF is in place. Bioversity International is in the process of developing a capacity development strategy which currently is in a draft stage. A key difficulty is the fragmentation of work along ten CRPs that Bioversity is involved in, making it difficult for the capacity development unit to provide adequate support to all projects. In contrast to ICRAF, the capacity development support unit is not financed centrally, but rather through charging time to different CRPs.

Overall, capacity development appears to be managed strictly Center by Center in FTA. However, in the Evaluation Team’s perception there is significant unexplored potential for cross-Center fertilization regarding capacity development approaches and support procedures, and for generating significant programmatic synergies for delivering capacity development support to projects, especially towards important boundary partners exhibiting critical capacity gaps (see recommendation 7).

4.5 Communications

FTA’s approach to communication separates research communication from public awareness communication. While the former is in the hands of scientists, and paid for directly from research funds, the latter is managed and funded separately. FTA Centers

focus on different levels regarding FTA-related communications. Over the past years, CIFOR has evolved into what is now considered a center of excellence regarding global and national communications. CIFOR mostly works at a press level to reach policy-makers in order to influence national and international policies, while ICRAF communications have more focus on the farm-to country level.

Within FTA, each Participant Institution is responsible for communicating its own research findings. This includes writing, editing and publishing of component level research outputs – books, publications, journal articles, and other publications. The Evaluation Team, however, observed close collaboration between the four FTA Centers in various respects such shared blogging, cross-posting and promotion of each other's' publications, journal articles, blog stories and press releases. FTA Centers also jointly participate in conferences and workshops, for example, the 2013 Global Landscapes Forum in Warsaw.

Regarding its online presence, FTA launched a new standalone FTA website in February 2014 in order to strengthen the program's identity. The new website is de-branded to increase inclusiveness and to attract more users. CIFOR itself enjoys intense and quickly increasing web traffic, with close to 350 000 unique visitors in 2012 and, in the first six months of 2013 alone, some 400 000 downloads of FTA publications. Across all FTA Centers, scientists have posted more than 200 blog entries in the first six months of 2013 alone, to promote the program's outputs and key messages are posted in FTA Centers' blogs. The CGIAR Consortium Office also maintains a web page dedicated to FTA directly associated with its main landing page (CGIAR.org). CIFOR curates content from FTA Participant Institutions to this site each week. The latter page also includes a link to Forests News, CIFOR's blog. All four Centers make extensive use of the most popular social media tools to promote the program's outputs. The program, through the Centers, is present on Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, Flickr, and Slideshare.

The Evaluation Team commends CIFOR and strong leadership on FTA communications and encourages the continuation of the present branding strategy: presentation of FTA as a CGIAR program and of FTA Participant Institutions as partners in that program.

However, from some interviews conducted with country partners, in several cases it was remarked that country-level communications both for FTA as a whole and for specific lines of research could be strengthened. While considered good in some countries, in other countries partners felt not sufficiently informed and reached out to. Solutions to this include working more closely with national partners and using them and their networks as communication channels, and to better integrate with national research, educational and extension organizations.

5 Effectiveness and efficiency of institutional arrangements

5.1 Financial management

In terms of bilateral fundraising, the Evaluation Team identified more than 90 individual FTA donors. The top five bilateral donors – the European Union/Commission, Mars Inc., Norway, Australia and the USA – represent half of the overall financial volume and about 80 percent of overall bilateral expenditures were charged to the top 15 bilateral donors. Within those top 15, three donors are not CGIAR Fund Donors: Mars Inc., Germany, and IDH/The Sustainable Trade Initiative, which together represent a quarter of the volume in that group.

CIFOR and ICRAF have enjoyed rapid growth of their bilateral revenues – on average with more than 10 percent per year – over past years, while Bioversity International’s bilateral revenue stagnated until 2010 and then substantially declined. CIAT has enjoyed overall moderate bilateral growth. When drawing conclusions for FTA from these figures, it is important to keep in mind that the share of bilateral funding mapped to FTA – and hence the validity conclusions for FTA – is very high for CIFOR and ICRAF, moderate for Bioversity International, and marginal for CIAT⁹.

CIFOR, ICRAF and CIAT appear to have been in the comfortable position of having a large and growing bilateral project portfolio from which projects could be mapped to FTA. Bioversity International, on the other hand, was not able to raise bilateral funds correspondingly. With increasing difficulties in bilateral fundraising in 2012 and 2013, Bioversity is under additional pressure to provide for a significant bilateral share in FTA.

In interviews, but also reflected in discussion in the FTA Steering Committee, the idea of FTA Participant Institutions having to provide a certain “leverage ratio” was floated. In the Evaluation Team’s view, any fixed ratio of Window 1 and 2 to bilateral budgets across all FTA Participant Institutions does not do justice to potential intrinsic difficulties in raising bilateral funds for different purposes. The Evaluation Team also perceives such a fixed ratio to contradict one important function of programmatic Window 1 and 2 FTA funds, i.e. of compensating lack of bilateral donor interest for otherwise highly relevant areas of research.

All four FTA Centers have dedicated units for resource mobilization that naturally focus on mobilizing bilateral, project-level resources for the Center. The intensity of bilateral fundraising activities for all four Participating Centers appears to have been purposefully increased over the last years, driven by two issues: i) a strong perception of the Center BOTs that a high dependency on Window 1 and 2 funds represents a risk to the Center, and ii) the fact that the perceived value-add, again from a Center perspective, associated with programmatic FTA fundraising remained limited. These trends are a reason for concern as they counter efforts to increase FTA’s Window 1 and 2 programmatic funds. The Evaluation Team is of the opinion that several years of stable and reliable operation are required to

⁹ In terms of their overall 2012 expenditures, FTA-related expenditures represented 98 percent for CIFOR, 62 percent for ICRAF, 17 percent for Bioversity, and 1 percent for CIAT.

rebuild trust, to reduce the currently perceived need of Centers to manage dependency on Window 1 and 2 funds, and to demonstrate the value-added of FTA to FTA Participant Institutions (see recommendation 12).

Mobilization of Window 1 and 2 resources for FTA have largely been in the hands of the Fund Council and the Consortium Board. Window 1 resources are allocated to CRPs by the Fund Council, based on recommendations by the Consortium Board. Window 2 resources are allocated to CRPs by donors themselves. All five Window 2 donors are also contributing to FTA as bilateral donors and four also as Window 1 donors.

Window 1 and 2 disbursements have substantially lagged behind budgets. For example, the first disbursement of Window 1 and 2 FTA funds was received in November 2011 after FTA had been operational for four months. In 2013, only 66 percent of the full 2013 FTA budget was paid out but the remainder is expected in 2014.

In interviews, FTA Center staff and BOT members were also concerned that Window 1 and 2 payments at full volume had not been considered certain, and that risk scenarios for partly defaulting Window 1 and 2 contributions was entertained. This represents a contradiction to what the reform intends, and there is a great need to ensure increased predictability and reliability of Window 1 and 2 FTA program resources.

FTA has shown considerable spending performance in view of these sometimes uncertain and delayed disbursements. In its first two years, from program start (01 July 2011) to 30 June 2013, FTA spent 92 percent of its USD 146 million budget for that period, leaving USD 11 million unspent.

A reason for concern is the continued practice by many bilateral donors of issuing grants that exhibit significantly insufficient cost recovery and need to be co-financed from other funds. In interviews, FTA's Window 1 and 2 funds were described as the main source for this type of co-financing and the Evaluation Team estimates that somewhere between 8 and 16 percent of FTA's Window 1 and 2 funds used to recover costs not covered under FTA bilateral grant agreements.

To the Evaluation Team, this situation is reminiscent of the situation before the CGIAR reform, when attempts were made to rid the CGIAR of so-called "free riders," i.e. donors issuing bilateral grants that require cross-financing by donors providing less restricted funds in order to be financially sustainable for Centers. The otherwise influential 2009 Stripe Review of Social Sciences in the CGIAR recommended plainly: "Scarce unrestricted resources must not be used to subsidize restricted funding projects. [...]". The term "leveraging" has frequently surfaced during interviews in this context, but is considered inappropriate by the Evaluation Team because it sells a disadvantage as an advantage.

Currently, both the lack of long-term reliability and the diversion of significant Window 1 and 2 FTA resources to co-finance bilateral grants limit FTA's ability to fund key areas of high relevance for which bilateral funds are hard to raise, such as Sentinel Landscapes.

Recommendation 8. The Evaluation Team recommends that the Fund Council and the Consortium Office improve the predictability, reliability and timely disbursement of Window 1 and 2 resources to FTA and urge CGIAR members to provide full cost recovery when acting as bilateral donors.

This recommendation is addressed to:

- the Fund Council, the Consortium Board, and their offices.

Key points (“must have’s”):

- Acknowledgment and declaration of intent of Fund Donors to ensure predictable and reliable funding that is disbursed timely, and explicit instructions of the Fund Council to the Consortium Office to work towards this objective.
- Acknowledgment and declaration of intent of Fund Donors to ensure full cost recovery for FTA bilateral grants whenever acting as bilateral donors, to the extent possible within their institutional rules and regulations.

Further suggestions:

- Fund Council establishes a system to increase transparency on incomplete cost recovery of bilateral FTA grants by Fund Donors and receives reports of the ensuing statistics.

5.2 Data management and reporting

The Evaluation Team identified several challenges related to data management across FTA Centers. Procedures at ICRAF are found to represent good practice. Overall coding reliability of research mapped to FTA is not yet satisfactory, and the Evaluation Team would have assigned about a quarter of all FTA projects reviewed to a different component. Predominantly in Components 2 and 3, there may be a desire to keep projects “at home”, i.e. in a component led by the respective project-implementing Center. Some projects are also fragmented across many CRPs and components, rendering straightforward management towards CRP objectives difficult. In addition, country information is not systematically tracked across program activities.

Recommendation 9. The Evaluation Team recommends that the quality and coherence of FTA data management be improved.

This recommendation is addressed to:

- the FTA Steering Committee, all FTA Participant Institutions.

Key points (“must have’s”):

- Overall coding reliability is improved and mapping of bilaterally funded projects to

FTA is decided at proposal stage.

- Country information is tracked as part of FTA expense reporting.
- Fragmentation of projects across many CRPs and components is avoided unless clearly justified by a project.
- FTA Centers should align to good practice processes similar to those currently in place at ICRAF.

Further suggestions:

- The One Corporate System (OCS) software is taken into consideration to align data management beyond FTA, satisfying a critical requirement for coherence from a Center perspective.

FTA's annual reporting to the Consortium Office and Board is based on detailed output-level "traffic light" reports and extensive narratives along pre-defined Consortium templates. FTA's progress reporting, while detailed, diligent and transparent, has remained incomplete, as only output-level achievements are systematically tracked and reported. Outcome-level results are described in selected case examples only. The present reporting mechanisms exhibits several challenges. Formats and definitions have changed almost yearly, reflecting evolving Consortium Office guidance. This renders difficult a systematic follow up on output-level performance across years. Bilaterally funded projects mapped to FTA – representing most of FTA's research – appear primarily managed as Center projects. Their mapping to FTA is sometimes only hard and fast once expenses have been occurred. Hence, explicit targets are developed without knowing what projects will be available to deliver them, and achievements are collected from project teams on top of their bilateral reporting indicators.

The Evaluation Team has not been able to verify any reduction of reporting requirements to bilateral donors. At the same time, significant reporting requirements towards the Consortium Board and Office have emerged. It is hoped that in future years increased donor alignment will lead to the intended reduction of the overall reporting burden.

6 Governance and management

6.1 FTA governance

A series of institutions and bodies have contributed to FTA governance. FTA's Lead Center during the first phase, CIFOR, has performed well as fiduciary and legal agent and its BOT and its DGs have shown a remarkable degree of careful attention to not leverage this role unduly. The Evaluation Team finds that this hands-off approach was appropriate. It is hard to imagine that FTA, as a partnership program with few but heavily invested participants, could be led and managed successfully by a Lead Center that dominates key governance

functions such as providing strategic direction, allocating funds, and overseeing management.

The FTA Steering Committee was established following the SRF guidance and provided effective and professional leadership during FTA's inception phase and the first years of operation. It has made commendable efforts towards the inclusion of new FTA Participant Institutions and the establishment of a competitive holdback fund for collaborative research.

However, an issue of particular concern is the apparently limited ability of the Steering Committee to establish strategic priorities for research under FTA, and to allocate fund accordingly across FTA Participant Institutions. Overall, the mandate of the Steering Committee should be considerably strengthened and explicitly include responsibilities for strategic priority setting and resource allocation. Going forward, a significant share of independent voice should be established in the Steering Committee to allow for efficient decision-making on issues for which other members have legitimate but vested and conflicting interests. At the same time, the significant commitments FTA Participant Institutions made and are expected to make regarding work funded directly by bilateral donors needs to be recognized and reflected in continued participation of those institutions in the Steering Committee.

The Consortium Board and Office, and all Boards of FTA Participant Institutions also play important roles in FTA governance. However, there is no comprehensive and shared understanding of how all key governance functions are divided among these bodies. In addition, there seems to be an unnecessarily formal and distant modus operandi between the Consortium Office on the one side and the Steering Committee and the FTA Participant Institutions on the other side, which effectively reduces governance efficiency.

Recommendation 10. The Evaluation Team recommends strengthening and clarifying the mandate and the independent voice of the FTA Steering Committee, and to connect it better to the Consortium Board and Office.

This recommendation is addressed to:

- The FTA Steering Committee, the FTA Lead Center BOT, FTA Participating Institutions' governing bodies, and the Consortium Board and its office.

Key points ("must have's"):

- The Terms of Reference of the FTA Steering Committee are revised and adopted by the Steering Committee and the Lead Center BOT, and then endorsed by the Consortium Board and the governing bodies of other FTA Participant Institutions. They reflect, among others:
 - The Steering Committee's responsibilities in setting programmatic research priorities and strategically allocating Window 1 and 2 funds in the best interest of the program while taking the current funding situation of a large share of bilateral funding explicitly into account;

- Legitimate institutional interests of FTA Participant Institutions and how these are managed and balanced *vis-à-vis* programmatic goals;
- Separately describe FTA-related governance functions of the Steering Committee, the Lead Center BOT, other FTA Participant Institutions' governing bodies, and the Consortium Board and Office, and ensure that, taken together, all standard program governance functions are covered without gaps and with a minimum of duplication.
- Four individuals are added to the FTA Steering Committee: three without any affiliation to the Consortium or FTA Participant Institutions (to strengthen independent expert voice), and one as authorized representative of the Consortium Office (to increase decision-making efficiency and alignment between FTA Participant Institutions and the Consortium Office). The Steering Committee Chair should be elected from among the three independent members that serve in their personal capacity.

6.2 FTA management

The FTA Director and the FTA leadership group showed strong commitment and worked hard to make FTA a success. Overall, however, the Director's mandate is too weak and the FTA leadership group's duties are insufficiently integrated into their home Center job descriptions. This stands in the way of translating a strengthened future mandate of the FTA Steering Committee into results on the ground.

Recommendation 11. The Evaluation Team recommends that the Director’s mandate and independence, and FTA’s overall line management reporting be strengthened.

This recommendation is addressed to:

- the FTA Steering Committee, the FTA Lead Center BOT, FTA Participating Institutions and their governing bodies.

Key points (“must have’s”):

- The FTA Director’s mandate and Terms of Reference are revised and adopted by the FTA Steering Committee and the Lead Center BOT and include:
 - Approval authority for mapping bilaterally funded projects to FTA;
 - Increased budgetary authority for Window 1 and 2 FTA funds;
 - Direct reporting to the Steering Committee;
 - The Director’s FTA-related performance appraisal should be based on input from the Steering Committee, synthesized by the Steering Committee Chair, that is then embedded in the Director’s home Center’s HR processes.
- FTA’s vertical chain of command is strengthened by integrating FTA-related ToRs for Coordinators into the job descriptions managed by FTA Participant Institutions and by ensuring the FTA Director’s input into annual performance assessment with adequate weight as well as by establishing suitable upward feedback processes.

6.3 Performance-based resource allocation in the CGIAR

On the level of the CGIAR system, the Consortium Board and Office have driven the development of a system for performance-based allocation of resources that is intended to be applied to FTA for its second phase, starting in 2017. The Evaluation Team is concerned about the lack of realism in those plans and finds that key issues remain unresolved such as i) difficulties of attributing research activities to development outcomes, ii) the available resources, time and methodology for monitoring results, iii) the lack of reliable methodology to compare the value for money across very different types of results, and iv) the considerable time-lags between activities and results.

Without fundamental adjustments, it seems unlikely that a workable and useful resource allocation system will be in place by 2017. For example, the idea of mechanically and quantitatively monitoring and comparing value for money of research contributions to development outcomes contradicts current knowledge in the fields of aid efficiency, value for money, and rational decision-making. On the same line, it is unrealistic to attempt to aggregate up contributions of FTA research from projects to the whole program on the level of the current set of IDOs.

In addition, in contrast to some narrow definitions of Result-based Management (RBM), resource allocation cannot be solely based on past performance in reaching results, but should be based on rational decision-making involving expert advice, analysis of the likelihood for uptake and use of scientific outputs of specific lines of research, comparative

advantages of institutions involved and available funding, in addition to past performance in reaching attributable results.

The considerable expertise of FTA's MEIA Team should be leveraged more than in the past for this work and for aligning the ensuing system and FTA's own results framework (recommendation 4) with each other.

7 FTA added value to date and the way forward

Structurally, FTA has been set up and has operated largely as planned. FTA researchers overwhelmingly felt that positive net benefit had been created. The Evaluation Team is rather more skeptical and feels that FTA's return on investment, while potentially significant, has not yet materialized.

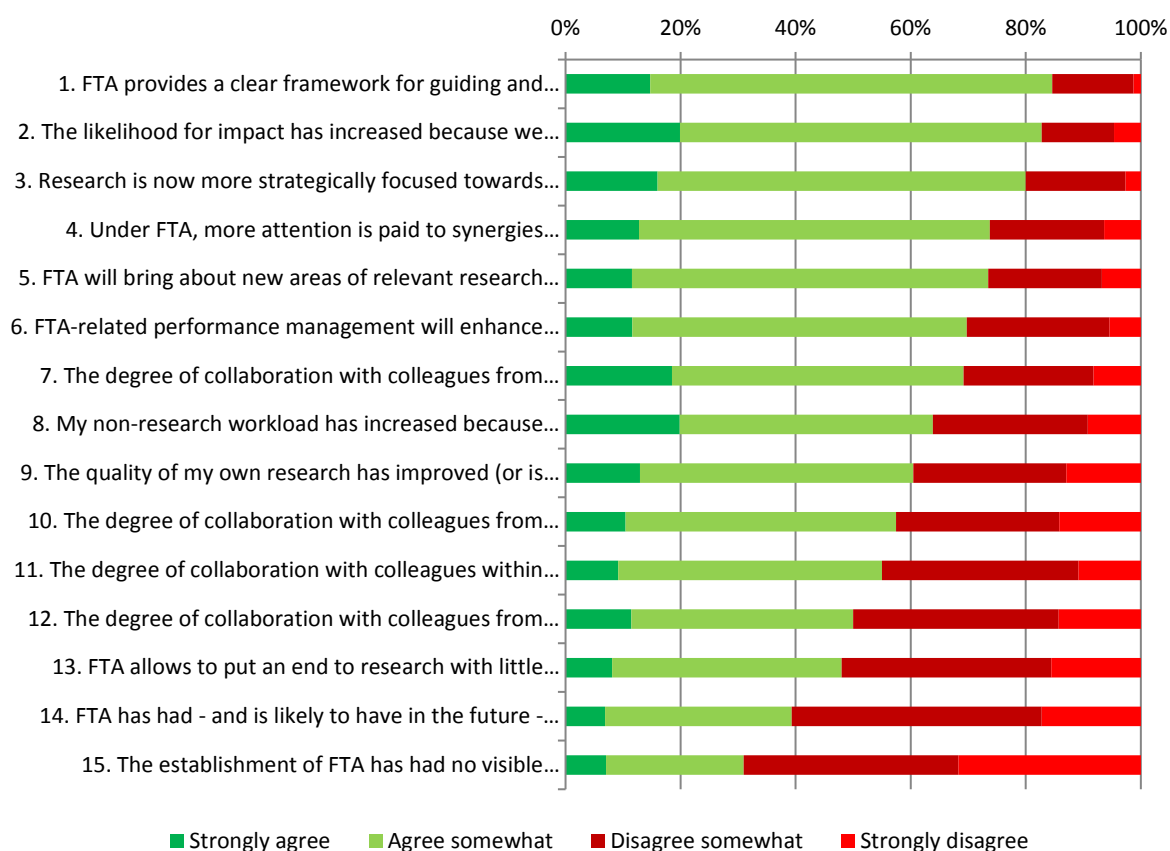
Observed changes attributable to FTA are a strengthened culture of collaboration between FTA Participant Institutions and an increased focus on outcomes. Disadvantages are mostly reflected in the opportunity cost associated with several senior CGIAR personnel and staff devoting considerable time to participating in the general reform process, in setting up and operating FTA, and in satisfying FTA-related reporting and planning requirements.

FTA researchers – of which two thirds participated in an online survey - have largely positive perceptions of the effects FTA has had to date, as summarized in Figure 3.

In terms of reaching objectives of the CGIAR reform, progress in FTA is still nascent in two ways. First, the work under FTA is still rationalized bottom-up instead of top-down. Research within CRPs is intended to be derived from intended development outcomes. On the contrary, current linkages between FTA activities and IDOs are constructed bottom-up, exactly the other way around. Second, neither FTA nor the Consortium Board and Office currently have a working mechanism for performance-based resource allocation in place. Rather ironically, years after the CGIAR reform was started with results-based management arguments, there is less performance-based allocation of resources today than before the reform. Both issues must be urgently addressed by the FTA Participant Institutions and the Consortium Board and Office.

A central issue of concern of overriding importance is the poor state of affairs when it comes to the degree of trust between the FTA Participant Institutions and the Consortium Board and Office. The Evaluation Team was surprised by the level of frustration that surfaced in some cases, as well as by a kind of fatalistic attitude of some researchers not voicing their dissent even if in factual disagreement.

Figure 3. Feedback of FTA researchers on statements describing benefits and costs associated with FTA.¹⁰



A trust-based relationship between FTA Centers, their partners, and the Consortium Office and Board are necessary ingredients of critical importance for the future success of FTA. Going forward, FTA is therefore in need of a period of stable operations, during which confidence in the value-add of the CGIAR reform and the reliability and functionality of the reformed system can be built, and the recommendations of this report can be implemented. To the Evaluation Team it has become evident that – especially in the current funding situation – the realization of a results-driven programmatic approach for FTA critically hinges on cooperation and collaboration between the Consortium Board and Office on the one hand, and FTA Participant Institutions on the other. Hence, it was surprising to see that the relationship between the Consortium Office and FTA Participant Institutions has characteristics of a donor-recipient relationship, rather than that of partners. A step change

¹⁰ N=129 to 156, depending on question, not counting “don’t know” answers. Questions have been re-ordered and numbered relative to the questionnaire. The question text was “Please let us know your level of agreement with the following statements regarding benefits and costs associated with conducting research under FTA, compared to the situation before FTA was created. (Some of these statements are purposely provocative to trigger clear responses from you and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Evaluation Team).”

of direction and gears towards better and more collaboration is required, without which success in establishing any of the above key requirements seems unlikely.

Recommendation 12. The Evaluation Team recommends that the Fund Council, the Consortium Board and Office, the FTA Lead Center and FTA Participating Institutions work together to ensure a multi-year period of stable operations during which confidence and trust is built, the recommendations of this report are implemented, and important requirements for FTA's future success are put in place.

This recommendation is addressed to:

- the Fund Council, the Consortium Board, and their offices, the FTA Steering Committee, the FTA Lead Center and its BOT, the other FTA Participant Institutions and their governing bodies.

Key points (“must have’s”):

- All parties involved must jointly work towards ensuring a multi-year period of stable operations during which confidence in the value-add of the CGIAR reform and the reliability and functionality of the reformed system is build.
- During this period, the FTA Lead Center and FTA Participating Institutions must:
 - align their institutional strategies to that of FTA and to other CRPs they are invested in;
 - increase their selectivity *vis-à-vis* bilaterally funded research mapped to FTA; and
 - use their existing donor contacts to better align future bilateral work to FTA and, eventually, help to shift contributions directly to FTA as a program whenever feasible.
- During this period, the Fund Council and the Consortium Board and Office must:
 - ensure a financial and regulative operating environment that is stable, predictable and reliable over a time-horizon of several years;
 - acknowledge current funding realities of a primarily bilaterally driven FTA research portfolio and hence consider FTA Participant Institutions as co-investors in addition to grant recipients; and
 - urgently ensure that a workable and realistic system for results measurement and results-oriented management is ready for deployment in time for FTA second phase preparations, i.e. during early 2016.

Bibliography

Documents Cited in this Report

- Agarwal, B., 2009. Gender and forest conservation: The impact of women's participation in community forest governance. *Ecol. Econ.* 68, 2785–2799. doi:10.1016/j.ecolecon.2009.04.025
- Agarwal, B., 2010. *Gender and Green Governance: The Political Economy of Women's Presence Within and Beyond Community Forestry*. Oxford University Press.
- Akinnifesi, F.K., P. Chirwa, O.C. Ajayi, G. Sileshi, P. Matakala, F. Kwesiga, R. Harawa, W. Makumba, 2008. Contributions of agroforestry research to livelihood of smallholder farmers in southern Africa: Part 1. Taking stock of the adaptation, adoption, and impacts of fertilizer tree options. *Agric. J.* 31 58–75.
- Calle, Z., Murgueitio E., Chará J., Molina C. H., Zuluaga A. F., Calle A., 2013. A Strategy for Scaling-up Intensive Silvopastoral Systems in Colombia *Journal of Sustainable Forestry*. doi:DOI:10.1080/10549811.2013.817338
- CGIAR, 2011a. Program Implementation Agreement CRP6 - Forests, Trees and Agroforestry: Livelihoods, Landscapes and Governance between the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (operating under the name of Bioversity International), on behalf of the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers, and The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR).
- CGIAR, 2011b. A Strategy and Results Framework for the CGIAR - 2011.
- CGIAR, 2011c. Consortium Performance Agreement under the CGIAR Fund - CRP6.
- CGIAR, 2011d. Joint Agreement between Bioversity International on behalf of the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers, and the Fund Council of the CGIAR Fund, represented by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development - PPA.
- CGIAR, 2011e. CGIAR Research Program 6: Forests, Trees and Agroforestry Program Participant Agreement - ICRAF.
- CGIAR, 2011f. Forests, Trees and Agroforestry Program Participant Agreement - CIAT.
- CGIAR, 2012. CGIAR Research Program: Forests, Trees and Agroforestry Program Participant Agreement - CIAT Amendment.
- CGIAR Consortium Board, 2011. CGIAR - Consortium Level Gender Strategy.
- CGIAR Consortium Office, 2013a. Guidance for CRP Second Call DRAFT - Version 2.
- CGIAR Consortium Office, 2013b. The CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework Management Update, 2013-2014.
- CGIAR Consortium Office, 2013c. CRP Portfolio Annual Progress Report (January 1, 2012 - December 31, 2012).
- CGIAR Science Council, 2009. *Stripe Review of Social Sciences in the CGIAR*.

- CIFOR, 2008. CIFOR's Strategy: 2008-2018 - Making a Difference for Forests and People.
- CIFOR, 2012a. Forest, Trees and Agroforestry - Annual Report 2011.
- CIFOR, 2012b. Climate change mitigation. Avoiding deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing forest carbon stock - A framework proposal.
- CIFOR, 2012c. Adapting forests and people to climate change. Conserving ecosystem services that reduce risk to the world's poorest -A framework proposal.
- CIFOR, 2013a. CRP6 performance monitoring report 2012 Forests, Trees and Agroforestry - Annual Progress Report.
- CIFOR, 2013b. Gender in the CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry: A strategy for research and action. Bogor, Indonesia.
- CIFOR, 2013c. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Impact Assessment Strategy for CRP6 (2012 – 2016) Forests, Trees and Agroforestry: Livelihoods, Landscapes and Governance.
- CIFOR, 2014. Forest, Trees and Agroforestry - Annual Report 2013 (Draft).
- Clark, W.C., Tomich, T.P., van Noordwijk, M., Guston, D., Catacutan, D., Dickson, N.M., McNie, E., 2011. Boundary work for sustainable development: Natural resource management at the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. doi:10.1073/pnas.0900231108
- Coe R., Sinclair F., Barrios E., 2014. Scaling up agroforestry requires research “in” rather than “for” development.
- Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers, 2011. Constitution of the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers.
- Cornwall, A., 2003. Whose Voices? Whose Choices? Reflections on Gender and Participatory Development. World Dev. 31, 1325–1342.
- CRP6, 2012. CRP6 Components Operational Plan Logframes 2012-14.
- CRP6, 2013. CRP6 Components Operational Plan Logframes 2013-15.
- CRP6 Steering Committee, 2011. 2nd CRP6 Steering Committee meeting - 08 September 2011.
- CRP6 Steering Committee, 2013. 7th Steering Committee Meeting Minutes.
- Earl, S., Carden, F., Smutylo, T., 2001. Outcome mapping. Building learning and reflection into development programs. International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Cairo, Dakar, Montevideo, Nairobi, New Dehli, Singapore.
- Franzel S., G.L. Denning, J-P. Lillesø-Barnekow, A.R. Mercado, 2004. Scaling up the impact of agroforestry: Lessons from three sites in Africa and Asia. World Agroforestry Centre, Kenya and the Philippines. Agrofor. Syst. 61-621-3 329–344.
- FTA, 2011. CGIAR Research Program 6 - Forests, Trees and Agroforestry: Livelihoods, Landscapes and Governance Proposal.
- Independent Evaluation Arrangement, 2013. Evaluation of the CGIAR Research Program “Forests, Trees and Agroforestry” (FTA) - Inception Report.

- Independent Evaluation Group, 2007. Sourcebook for Evaluating Global and Regional Partnership Programs.
- Independent Science and Partnership Council, 2012. Strengthening Strategy and Results Framework through prioritization.
- Jackson, C., 1993. Doing What Comes Naturally? Women and Environment in Development. *World Dev.* 21, 1947–1963.
- Kauck, D., Paruzzolo, S., Schulte, J., 2010. CGIAR Gender Scoping Study. International Center for Research on Women - ICRW -, Washington, D.C. USA.
- Manfre, C., Rubin, D., 2012. Integrating gender into forestry research. A guide for CIFOR scientist and programme administrators. Meijaard E., Sheil D., n.d. Review and Synthesis on Long-Term Experiment Networks.
- Meinzen-Dick R., Jain D., Di Tommaso M.L., 2012. Review of Gender and Green Governance: The Political Economy of Women's Presence Within and Beyond Community Forestry, by Bina Agarwal. *Oxf. Univ. Press* 141–143.
- Montagnini F., Campos J. J., Cornelius J., Finegan B., Guariguata M., Marmillod D., Mesén F., Ugalde L., 2002. Environmentally-friendly forestry systems in Central America. *Bois For. Trop.* 2722.
- OECD, 2011. Towards Green Growth.
- Palenberg, Markus, Institute for Development Strategy, 2011. Tools and Methods for Evaluating the Efficiency of Development Interventions.
- Puri, S, Nair, PKR, 2004. Agroforestry research for development in India: 25 years of experiences of a national program. *Agrofor. Syst.* 61 437–452.
- Renkow, M., Byerlee, D., 2010. The impacts of CGIAR research: A review of recent evidence. *Food Policy* 35, 391–402. doi:10.1016/j.foodpol.2010.04.006
- Rocheleau D., Edmunds D., 1997. Women, men and trees: Gender, power and property in forest and agrarian landscapes. *World Dev* 25 1351–1371.
- Science Council and CGIAR Secretariat, 2007. Lessons Learnt from Selection and Implementation of the CGIAR Challenge Programs.
- Science Council of the CGIAR, 2007. Report of the Second External Program and Management Review of the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR).
- UNEP, 2011. Forests in a Green Economy - A Synthesis.
- United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development - Rio+20, 2012. The Future we want.
- van Noordwijk, M. et al., 2001. Negotiation support models for integrated natural resource management in tropical forest margins. *Conserv. Ecol.* 52 21.
- World Agroforestry Centre, 2013. Capacity Development Strategy 2013-2018.