



# The Forests Dialogue

ENGAGE! EXPLORE! CHANGE!

## Tree Plantations in the Landscape Initiative Paper

By Peter Kanowski

### BACKGROUND

There are a number of strands to the genesis of The Forests Dialogue’s (TFD) *Tree Plantations in the Landscape* (TPL) initiative. All have their origins in recognition that planted forests, including tree plantations established for wood production<sup>1</sup>, continue to grow in both extent and significance. Tree plantations currently provide a third of the world’s industrial wood, a proportion expected to increase significantly in coming decades. They also have great potential to deliver environmental services and social benefits. However, many aspects of tree plantations have been and remain controversial, with concerns that associated environmental and social costs often outweigh economic and other benefits.

As a consequence, a number of initiatives focused on planted forests and tree plantations have emerged since 2000. TFD’s TPL initiative draws from and connects to these, which include:

- FAO’s thematic studies of planted forests, 2002-2007, leading to the publication of *FAO’s Statement of Principles for Planted Forests in Sustainable Forest Management*<sup>2</sup>
- TFD’s *Intensively Managed Planted Forests* (IMPF) initiative, 2005-2008, leading to the publication of a *TFD Review*<sup>3</sup>, and related TFD initiatives on deforestation-free supply chains, genetically-modified trees, landscapes and locally-controlled forestry<sup>4</sup>;
- the *New Generation Plantations Platform* (NGPP)<sup>5</sup>, established in 2007;
- the 3rd International Congress on Planted Forests, 2013<sup>6</sup>;
- various civil society initiatives, such as those facilitated by the Forest Peoples Programme, Global Justice Ecology Project, the International Union of Forest Research Organisations, and the World Rainforest Movement<sup>7</sup>.

In a second-phase *Intensively Managed Planted Forests* “IMPF2” Scoping Dialogue<sup>8</sup> prior to the XIV World Forestry Congress, September 2015, TFD explored whether, and what form and focus of, further initiatives might add value to these previous and ongoing activities about planted forests and tree plantations. The Scoping Dialogue discussions were complemented by a plenary Planted Forests session at the XIV World Forestry Congress, and by a contemporaneous Civil Society Alternative Program<sup>10</sup> focused on tree plantations. The TPL initiative emerged as a result.

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## SCOPE AND FOCUS

The scope and focus of the TPL initiative are framed primarily by the priorities agreed for future dialogue at the TFD IMPF2 Scoping Dialogue, informed by subsequent discussion at and around the XIV World Forestry Congress<sup>9</sup>. Those priorities were reported in Box 1 of the Co-Chairs' Summary of the Scoping Dialogue<sup>11</sup>, reproduced below.

### **BOX 1 - PRIORITY TOPIC AREAS FOR ANY FUTURE DIALOGUE ABOUT TREE PLANTATIONS**<sup>12</sup>

*(REPRODUCED FROM CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY, TFD IMPF2 SCOPING DIALOGUE)*

1. **Plantation forests in the context of the global development agenda** (as represented, for example, by the Sustainable Development Goals)<sup>13</sup> and megatrends, and in the contexts of development at multiple scales, from global to local. This topic would also include consideration of:

- the definition and scope of plantation forests and 'IMPF', and associated data and reporting issues;
- articulation of a shared vision for the roles of plantation forests.

2. **The design and implementation of plantation forests in the context of a landscape approach**, and at different scales and geographies. This topic includes consideration of approaches to landscape-scale integration of forestry and agriculture, and of meeting multiple demands from and through sustainable productive landscapes. It also includes exploration of the contribution of plantation forests and planted trees of other forms to landscape restoration<sup>14</sup>.

3. **Approaches to enable good governance and inclusive development**, including (but not limited to):

- recognition of rights holders in decision processes<sup>15</sup>;
- implementation of the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent;
- exploration of how different models of plantation forest development can act as models for inclusive development and locally-controlled forestry<sup>16</sup>;
- exploration of the complementary and synergistic roles of key actor groups (e.g. governments, financiers, businesses, consumers);
- promoting of the flow of information between stakeholders and across scales.

4. **Identifying key externalities associated with the development and management of plantation forests**, from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders; identifying gaps in knowledge; and considering the net impacts and externalities of plantation forestry as key decision criteria. This topic would also consider the definition and assessment of environmental and social services associated with models of plantation forestry, and how they might be monitored.

5. **The diversification of the forms and species composition of plantation forests, the sustainability of plantation forestry systems, and access to and use of new technologies.**

One of the consequences of discussions at the XIV World Forestry Congress and CSAP was agreement to retitle the TFD initiative "Tree Plantations in the Landscape", in recognition of the contested definitional issues discussed in the IMPF2 Background Paper<sup>17</sup>, and at the Congress and CSAP.

The Scoping Dialogue also identified five principles for a future TFD initiative on “plantation forests”; these are reproduced in Box 2.

Participants at the TFD IMPF2 Scoping Dialogue agreed that a TFD dialogue initiative that was based on the principles presented in Box 2, and that focused on the topic areas identified in Box 1, was likely to be worthwhile. They also reiterated that any dialogue should not assume that tree plantations were appropriate in a particular development or landscape context, but explore how various models and forms of forestry based on tree plantations could contribute to development and other objectives in those particular contexts.

#### **BOX 2 - PRINCIPLES FOR A FUTURE TFD INITIATIVE ON PLANTATION FORESTS**

*(REPRODUCED FROM CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY, TFD IMPF2 SCOPING DIALOGUE)*

1. Identify a niche for TFD that complements other international processes (e.g. IUFRO, NGPP). In this context, TFD is seen to have a key role as a global network and a mechanism for linking between global, 'regional', national and local levels.
2. TFD initiative should both harvest and share learnings and best practices from related processes and activities; both those conducted by TFD (e.g. Investing in Locally Controlled Forestry or Understanding Deforestation-Free dialogues) and by other institutions. These learnings should inform the design and conduct of future TFD plantation dialogues.
3. TFD should catalyse and support regional and national-level dialogue processes (e.g. the Brazilian Forest Dialogue<sup>18</sup>).
4. Any TFD initiative should develop alliances, broaden reach, and be implemented in collaboration with partners to avoid duplication, and capitalise on synergies.
5. Progress a dialogue initiative through field dialogues that address the 5 priority topic areas (Box 1) jointly, in recognition of their interconnectedness, noting that field dialogue locations could be chosen to emphasize different topic areas; and, as with all TFD initiatives, focus on realities and not only 'best cases'.

## **THE TFD TREE PLANTATIONS IN THE LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE**

The TFD TPL Initiative will address the issues and respect the principles presented above.

### Objectives

TPL Initiative objectives are to explore the priority topics identified in Box 1, in the light of outcomes and learnings from the IMPF and subsequent processes. In doing so, the initiative will be particularly conscious of the 'fracture lines' identified by the earlier IMPF dialogue, and the progress towards addressing them. These fracture lines include respect for FPIC principles; conflicts over land rights and use; the conversion of natural ecosystems; fair and equitable sharing of risks and benefits between parties, including outgrowers and companies; casualization of labour forces; and the risk that new technologies may exacerbate rather than resolve these issues. The Initiative recognizes the merits, but also the constraints, of embedding these issues within the context of a landscape<sup>19</sup>.

The Initiative will seek to establish specific, practical ways forward on the priority issues, contextualized as appropriate for particular countries and cases, and commitment from participants to pursue them. It will link to and share learnings with and from related initiatives, seek to inform and connect with key audiences, and to influence policy and practice through targeted participation and communication.

### Process

The TPL Initiative will follow the broader principles and processes that guide TFD initiatives generally, viz.

*for dynamic, bottom-up forms of dialogue ...to ensure that stakeholders' concerns are well represented, that explore difficult issues, find collaborative solutions, and make positive changes ...through constructive dialogue processes among all key stakeholders, based on mutual trust, enhanced understanding and commitment to change.<sup>20</sup>*

The TPL initiative will build from the IMPF2 Scoping Dialogue, and progress through a series of field dialogues that give effect to the principles presented in Box 2. Following established TFD processes, field dialogues will seek to engage key stakeholder groups at international, national and local levels.

### Oversight

Oversight of the TPL initiative, including identification of field dialogue locations, is the responsibility of an Advisory Group representing the diversity of stakeholder interests in TPL issues.

### Timing

TFD plans to convene the first TPL field dialogue in Chile in the first half of 2016.

## ENDNOTES

1. The term “plantation forests” was used in the Scoping Dialogue, noting that there are both imprecise and contested definitional issues; the intended focus of the Dialogue approximates that of the term “productive plantation forests” used by FAO – see [www.fao.org/forestry/plantedforests/67504/en/](http://www.fao.org/forestry/plantedforests/67504/en/).
2. FAO. 2010. *Planted forests in sustainable forest management. A statement of principles*. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/al248e/al248e00.pdf>
3. Kanowski, P & Murray, H (Lead Authors). 2008. TFD Review: intensively-managed planted forests. <http://theforestdialogue.org/publication/tfd-review-intensively-managed-planted-forests>
4. <http://theforestdialogue.org/initiatives/4Fs>; <http://theforestdialogue.org/initiatives/GMT>; <http://theforestdialogue.org/initiatives/ILCF>; <http://theforestdialogue.org/initiative/understanding-deforestation-free-udf>
5. <http://newgenerationplantations.org>
6. <http://www.fao.org/forestry/37902-083cc16479b4b28d8d4873338b79bef41.pdf>
7. <http://www.forestpeoples.org>, <http://www.iufro.org/science/task-forces/planted-forests/>, <http://globaljusticeecology.org>, <http://wrm.org.uy>
8. <http://theforestdialogue.org/dialogue/scoping-dialogue-intensively-managed-planted-forests-2>
9. <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/world-forestry-congress/programme/sub-theme-dialogues/land-uses/en/>
10. <http://www.csap-durban.org>
11. <http://theforestdialogue.org/publication/co-chairs-summary-scoping-dialogue-intensively-managed-planted-forests-2>
12. In the IMPF2 Co-Chairs Summary (#11), the term “forest plantations” was used in the headings of Boxes 1 & 2. This term has been changed to “tree plantations” to be consistent with the retitled TPL Dialogue. Use of the term “plantation forests” has been retained in the body of Box 1 at this stage, as that text was negotiated.
13. See: [sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015)
14. Participants noted that there should also be exploration of definitions associated with concepts of restoration. IUCN, for example, describes forest landscape restoration as a process that aims to regain ecological integrity and enhance human well being in deforested or degraded forest landscapes. [www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/forest/fp\\_our\\_work/fp\\_our\\_work\\_thematic/fp\\_our\\_work\\_flr/](http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/forest/fp_our_work/fp_our_work_thematic/fp_our_work_flr/)
15. In TFD processes, these are usually characterized as Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and smallholders
16. Participants noted in this context the outcomes of TFD’s Investing in Locally-Controlled Forestry Dialogue, and of similar initiatives; and the particular interests of smallholders, women, youth, and small-to-medium enterprises.
17. [http://theforestdialogue.org/sites/default/files/tfd\\_impf2\\_background\\_paper\\_24aug15.pdf](http://theforestdialogue.org/sites/default/files/tfd_impf2_background_paper_24aug15.pdf)
18. [www.dialogoforestal.org.br](http://www.dialogoforestal.org.br)
19. see, e.g: Sayer J. et al., 2014. Landscape approaches; what are the pre-conditions for success? *Sustainability Science* 10: 345–355.
20. *TFD Brochure*, at: <http://theforestdialogue.org/about/mission>