Making knowledge work for forests and people

Annual report 2017
Contents

Message from the Chair and Director 3
About Tropenbos International 4
TBI global programmes 6
A snapshot of key achievements 7
Towards sustainable use of forests and trees in climate-smart landscapes 9
  Governments implement effective land-based policies 10
  Local authorities make spatial and development policies more inclusive 16
  The private sector adopts innovative business and financing models 22
  Civil society acts as a watchdog and a partner in innovation 25
  Producer organisations of artisanal millers are better organised 28
Publications 32
Financial summary 34
General Board 35
Tropenbos International (TBI) believes that the sustainable use of forests and trees in tropical landscapes play a huge role in combatting the effects of climate change while also supporting people’s livelihoods and sustaining agricultural value chains. Forests and trees therefore are important components of a set of smart measures for the global community to take to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2017 the TBI programme “Productive landscapes for sustainable economic development, food security and integrated water management,” funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, came to an end. An external review of the programme concluded that the programme contributed significantly to the position and negotiating capacity of indigenous communities in Suriname and Colombia; the organizational structure and governance of the artisanal milling sector in Ghana and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the acceptance of the High Conservation Value (HCV) approach by oil palm companies in Indonesia; and the issuance of an important decree to stop the conversion of natural forests into rubber plantations in Viet Nam.

In 2017 TBI began to implement the inception phase of the Green Livelihood Alliance, a strategic partnership with IUCN NL, Friends of the Earth NL and the Government of the Netherlands. This programme aims to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to lobby and advocate for the development of productive landscapes for people, biodiversity and sustainable development. This partnership is a great opportunity for Tropenbos International to expand its network and work with new partners in the South and the Netherlands.

In 2017 TBI also joined the CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry. Within the consortium running this programme, and led by CIFOR, Tropenbos International links research with policy and practices, with a strong focus at country level— the home of our partner organisations.

This annual report informs you about a transformational change in the way TBI is organized. In 2017 Tropenbos International became a network organization with a secretariat in the Netherlands and six members on three continents. This transition helps TBI strengthen support for its work with local, subnational and national stakeholders in the forest and development sector and to mobilize support for national and international fund raising. TBI’s goal for the coming years is to strengthen and expand its network for the members’ collective mission: to improve the governance and management of forests and trees in climate resilient landscapes for the benefit of people, biodiversity and sustainable development.

Tini Hooymans
Chair

Rene Boot
Director
Mission
To improve the governance and management of tropical forests for the benefit of people, biodiversity and sustainable development

Objective
To ensure that knowledge is used effectively in the formulation of appropriate policies and managing forests for conservation and sustainable development

Vision
Tropenbos International (TBI) envisions a future in which forests and trees are used sustainably for the benefit of local people and the global community.

TBI's values
The core values of sustainability, inclusiveness, and equity guide TBI's work. TBI works together with its partners and other stakeholders based on respect, co-ownership and a focus on impact. TBI encourages and empowers local stakeholders to participate in shaping decisions on the governance of forested landscapes and value chains.

TBI's features
• a focus on smallholders, indigenous peoples, local communities and small and medium-sized entrepreneurs;
• a central role for knowledge and dialogue in decision-making about forests and trees;
• longstanding relationships of trust with key actors in six focus countries; and
• a network with members throughout the forested tropics that connects national experiences with international policy debate.

What does TBI do?
TBI supports public, private and civic actors to make informed decisions on three strategic priorities:
• inclusive landscape governance;
• sustainable land use and production practices; and
• responsible business and finance.

In order to achieve this, TBI carries out the following activities:
• generating and sharing evidence-based information that is relevant to policies and practices related to climate-smart landscapes;
• building individual and organisational capacity leading to improved skills and capacities and changed attitudes; and
• facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue and building coalitions leading to innovative and collective solutions to contentious natural resource issues.

About Tropenbos International
Tropenbos International Network

Since the beginning of 2017, TBI has operated as a network of voluntarily cooperating, legally autonomous member organisations. The TBI network continues the activities of Tropenbos International, which was an organisation with country offices in Colombia, DR Congo, Ghana, Indonesia, Suriname and Viet Nam, and headquarters in the Netherlands.

The new TBI network has two members in each of the main tropical forest regions: Southeast Asia, West and Central Africa, and South America. Each TBI network member is a foundation established according to local law and governed by a local board. TBI Netherlands and the TBI network are governed by the General Board. Each member is financially autonomous and responsible for fundraising, while the network raises funds for programmes that include more than one member. The TBI office in the Netherlands is designated as the secretariat and provides support services, including administrative processes, communication and fundraising at the international level.

All TBI network members share the same mission and commit themselves to collaboration in pursuit of common goals. However, each member develops its own programme to address the high-priority issues and the specific social setting, ecology and landscapes of the country in question. The overarching framework and common strategic priorities allow individual TBI members to benefit from experiences gained throughout the network and from cross-country comparisons and learning. Communication and direct interaction between all offices foster linkages. Because of the wide range of local and national experiences that the network members share, the TBI network is well positioned to make a significant contribution to international dialogue and to influencing decision-making processes.
TBI global programmes

Forest, Trees and Agroforestry - linking research with national policies and local practices

In 2017, TBI became a managing partner of the CGIAR Global Research programme on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA). FTA is the world’s largest development research programme and is focused on the key role of forests, trees and agroforestry in promoting sustainable and equitable development and addressing climate change.

TBI’s role within the FTA is to strengthen the linkages between high-level research and research agendas and national-level policies and landscape-level practices. TBI uses its national programmes and networks to support dialogue among a wide range of actors and to promote the uptake and impact of FTA’s cutting-edge research. During 2017, the programme’s inception year, TBI designed the programme with input from various meetings of experts and the facilitation of an interactive panel discussion on inclusive finance and business models and the Global Landscapes Forum in Bonn (see page 24).

Green Livelihoods Alliance - Forested Landscapes for Equity

The Green Livelihoods Alliance (GLA) is a five-year strategic partnership between Milieudefensie, IUCN NL, Tropenbos International and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The GLA partners aim to strengthen the role of civil society organisations in the inclusive and sustainable governance of forested landscapes and the restoration of degraded landscapes. This will be done by strengthening their capacities to influence governmental and corporate policies and practices at the local, national and international level.

The GLA is funded under the Dutch Dialogue and Dissent policy framework and is implemented in 16 landscapes in nine countries: Bolivia, DR Congo, Ghana, Indonesia, Liberia, Nigeria, Philippines, Uganda and Viet Nam. The GLA focuses on three thematic areas: energy transition; forest and land governance; and agro-commodities. The alliance started in 2016; 2017 was the first year of implementation.

Strengthening non-state actors to improve forest governance in West Africa

In West Africa, FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ have become important drivers for reforms in forest and land-use governance. They also contribute to countries’ abilities to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Both policy processes are designed through extensive consultation with all the stakeholders involved, including non-state actors (NSAs). NSAs take the role of technical advisors, representing the interests and insights of the scientific community, civil society and forest communities. NSAs also carry out independent monitoring of forest exploitation and of environmental and social safeguards for large investment projects.

In 2017, TBI started the “Strengthening the capacity of non-state actors to improve FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ processes in Western Africa” programme to increase and strengthen the participation of NSAs in three West African countries that are making significant progress toward full implementation of FLEGT-VPA and REDD+. TBI Ghana and the Nature and Development Foundation will implement the activities for Ghana; and TBI will work with Volunteers to Support International Efforts in Developing Africa (VOSIEDA) in Liberia, and with Gestion durable des Forets et Certification Forestière en Cote d’Ivoire in Ivory Coast.

In all three countries, the capacity of civil society organisations to monitor, advocate and engage with state actors at the local and national level has increased and these organisations have helped to influence the national FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ processes. However, this capacity is vested mostly with a limited number of NGOs working at the national level. The programme will focus on engaging and strengthening local-level NSAs and CSOs, including associations of forest-dwelling communities, farmers, small- and medium-sized enterprises, local authorities, women and youth.
A snapshot of key achievements

In March 2017 TBI joined a Dutch milestone agreement to promote sustainable forest management and strengthen corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the timber supply chain. Along with representatives of the timber, construction, furniture and retail industries, trade unions, civil society and the government, TBI signed the Convenant Bevorderen Duurzaam Bosbeheer

July 1, 2017 marked the end of the “Productive landscapes for sustainable economic development, food security and integrated water management” programme, which started in 2012 and was funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Some of the programme’s key achievements in the six partner countries, and in the Netherlands and internationally, are summarised in the figure below.

Colombia
➔ 15 ethnic groups in Amazonia documented intangible cultural knowledge in participatory maps and use them as negotiation tool
➔ Indigenous farming practices adopted in design of food aid programmes in the Amazon region

DR Congo
➔ Seven associations with almost 250 artisanal chainsaw millers created and now engaged in legal timber production

Ghana
➔ 253 farmers organised in 13 community-level tree growers’ associations pilot restoration of degraded forest reserves through farmer-based replanting schemes contributing to 100,000 ha to the national reforestation.
➔ More than 200 illegal chainsaw millers converted into artisanal millers and organized in SMFE associations.

Indonesia
➔ HCV mainstreaming has contributed to setting aside 250,000 ha of forests in oil palm estates
➔ 18 companies supported in HCV identification
➔ 400 professionals trained on HCV approach

Suriname
➔ 24 Samaaka communities made a participatory map of their 400,000 ha area and use it for negotiating with land developers
➔ 4 logging companies, covering over 400,000 ha of Suriname’s forest concessions obtained full FSC certification

Viet Nam
➔ Evaluation study contributed to a decree stopping conversion of natural forest into rubber plantations, leading to withdrawal or cancellation of 132 rubber plantation projects.

International and the Netherlands
➔ Significant contribution to the international body of knowledge about productive and climate-smart landscapes
➔ Design of innovative financing mechanisms and inclusive business models with investors and companies.
TBI — together with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Global Compact Network Netherlands — organised an international conference in The Hague on the future of Central African forests. More than 140 participants from the Government of the Netherlands, the private sector, academia, NGOs and civil society from Europe and the Central African region gathered to discuss challenges and share best practices to safeguard the forests.

Key points raised by the speakers and participants

First, because of the importance of the Congo Basin forests both locally and globally, people must think “beyond the forest” at the landscape level and address issues such as energy, agriculture and mining.

Second, initiatives must invest in women and improve land and tenure rights. Cécile Ndjebet, President of the African Women’s Network for Community Management of Forests, warned, “If we don’t invest in rural women, then the future of the Congo Basin forests can be in no way assured. We see what women can do, but if their rights are not secure, poverty will never be overcome and sustainable forestry will never be achieved.”

Third, institutions must be strengthened to improve land and forest governance, including the promotion of participatory land-use planning and responsible production and trade. Although this will not be an easy task, examples such as the Voluntary Partnership Agreements between the European Union and timber-producing countries show that this strengthening does lead to better governance.

Fourth, the private sector should engage with local communities to develop inclusive business and financing models for commodities such as timber, rubber, oil palm and cocoa, as well as specialised high-value but low-volume non-timber forest products. The Dutch development agenda could support such private-sector engagement in the sustainable use of forest landscapes. The Government of the Netherlands could play a role by supporting compliance with relevant international agreements, curbing trade in conflict minerals, and influencing policy and trade reforms.
Towards sustainable use of forests and trees in climate-smart landscapes

TBI envisions a future in which forests and trees are used in a way that benefits local people and the global community. By promoting the sustainable use of forests and trees in climate-smart landscapes in the tropics, TBI contributes to sustainable development and climate goals.

Promoting the role of forests and trees in climate-smart landscapes encompasses three inter-related domains: inclusive landscape governance; sustainable land use and production practices; and responsible business and finance. TBI’s work particularly emphasises the contribution of smallholders, local people, and small and medium enterprises, which results in these main outcomes:

- smallholders adopt climate-smart practices in agroforestry and sustainable forest management;
- local people — women in particular — participate more effectively in landscape-level decision-making processes; and
- private companies better integrate smallholders and comply more with environmental, social and governance standards and commitments.

To achieve these results requires changes in the policies and behaviours of many stakeholders at various levels: landscape, national and international. A number of conditions need to be in place to enable climate-smart landscapes: the implementation of a sound framework of land-based policies, inclusive spatial and development plans; well-organised groups of smallholders and entrepreneurs; an active civil society; and a private sector that has committed to sustainable practices.
Governments implement effective land-based policies

National governments play an important role in setting the right conditions for achieving climate-smart landscapes. They can implement effective policies and programmes that help prevent deforestation and forest degradation, eliminate illegal logging, and promote reforestation and restoration. TBI supports governments at all levels to design and implement policies and legislation that promote climate-smart landscapes with and for local people and smallholders:

- In 2017, TBI supported the government of Viet Nam with evidence-based information for the development of the country’s new forest law, which was adopted in 2017. For the first time, local communities are recognised as legal land owners and have a say in forest governance.

- In Suriname, TBI organised consultations with indigenous and Maroon communities to make sure their knowledge and perceptions of the use of forest resources would feed into the government’s REDD+ programme. The information gathered was used to develop the national Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment.

- In Indonesia, TBI was one of the participants in an innovative collaboration between local government, the private sector and civil society that supported the adoption of the Essential Ecosystem Areas decree in West Kalimantan. As a result, ecological corridors will be established that facilitate the movement of threatened species such as orangutans.
Communities are granted tenure rights through Viet Nam’s new Forest Law

Viet Nam’s forest cover was being lost quickly in the mid-20th century. Today, however, thanks to forest sector reforms that started in the mid-1990s, natural forests cover 40% of the country’s territory. In spite of this achievement, forest encroachment is once again on the rise. Large tracts of forestland are converted to monoculture plantations or destroyed to make way for infrastructure development. Communities that depend on forest resources find it more and more difficult to make ends meet.

Alarmed by these developments, the Vietnamese national assembly asked the government to revise the Forest Protection and Development Law of 2004. The Viet Nam Administration of Forests set up a law preparation board, which started collecting ideas and information from individuals and organisations at all levels.

Tropenbos Viet Nam seized this opportunity to support and inform the law revision process. As part of FORLAND, a coalition of nine civil society organisations working in the forest sector, TBI consulted experts in natural resource management and law and policy-making, conducted studies and carried out field surveys among forest communities in three provinces. TBI also organised field trips for policy makers, giving them a chance to listen firsthand to the difficulties people endure due to their limited forest tenure rights.

The information and evidence was shared through strategic lobbying and at a multi-stakeholder dialogue meeting with government and national assembly representatives and individuals from all organisations concerned with Viet Nam’s forests.

The efforts of the coalition were amply rewarded. In November 2017, the national assembly approved the new forest law, which included the coalition’s most important policy recommendations. First and foremost, local communities are now recognised as legal forest owners. This means that they will be granted forest and forestland tenure rights, which is vital for improving their livelihoods. Second, the law recognises the cultural practices and values of indigenous communities and grants communities the responsibility to manage sacred forests within the areas where they are located. Finally, forest governance is strengthened; the new law provides for transparent policy-making and planning procedures nationwide that include the voices and interests of forest communities.
Indigenous and Maroon communities share their vision for Suriname’s REDD+ Vision and Strategy

Unspoilt rainforest covers nearly the entire area of Suriname. The forest offers opportunities to boost the national economy and raise people’s living standards, but only if it is used in a sustainable way. The country’s participation in the United Nations REDD+ programme offers opportunities to contribute to this sustainability. Tropenbos Suriname has been involved with the development of Suriname’s REDD+ Readiness programme since 2013. The focus has been on strengthening the capacity of indigenous and Maroon tribal communities in order to make sure that their concerns are considered and that they too will benefit from future REDD+ projects. This is important, because Suriname lacks legal regulations for land rights, forest co-management and effective participation. Unplanned economic development, such as the expansion of interior roads, hydropower dams and gold mines, threatens wildlife, people’s livelihoods and ecosystem services.

Between May and October 2017, TBI visited thirteen areas that are home to indigenous and tribal communities. Project organisers spoke with 675 people — 365 men and 310 women — about their priorities for the future and the risks and benefits they perceived in the proposed REDD+ strategy. The men focused on road infrastructure, commercial logging and the need for collective land rights. The women were mostly concerned with education opportunities, availability of drinking water and electricity, and the development of handicrafts and agriculture to provide a sustainable income. The participants appreciated the employment that REDD+ projects may generate and the opportunities for management and protection of the forest. At the same time, they expressed their concern about the potential undermining of legal recognition of land rights by REDD+ and the weak enforcement of new legislation on community forests and protected areas.

The information gathered during TBI’s consultations — especially the need for collective land rights, sustainable income generation, education and gender equity — was used as input for the National REDD+ Vision and Strategy document and the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment. The latter identifies environmental and social risks and incorporates mitigation measures in an Environment and Social Monitoring Framework. The framework is used as a monitoring tool during the implementation of the REDD+ strategy. Approval of the national REDD+ strategy by the government of Suriname and the national assembly is expected in mid-2018.

Training in multidisciplinary landscape assessment

14 members of Pikin Slee village were trained in multidisciplinary landscape assessment, a method developed by the Center for International Forestry Research. It enabled them to identify changes in the climate and the resulting influences of these changes on their day-to-day activities, such as hunting, fishing, agriculture and the collection of non-timber forest products. With the information they gathered, a pilot plot will be created to experiment with various cultivation methods and plant varieties to help communities better adapt to climate change.
Giving orangutans in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, an ecological corridor

The Gunung Tarak Landscape in Ketapang District in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, consists of natural and production forests surrounded by oil palm plantations. Some of these plantations, as well as major roads constructed since the early 2000s, cut through the forest areas. This has had a major impact on the habitat of orangutan groups, especially the 2,500 orangutans living in the Sungai Putri production forest that have become completely cut off from the rest of the habitat.

In early 2017, TBI started collaborating with two of the oil palm companies in the area to develop ideas for an ecological corridor that would facilitate the free movement of the orangutans. The initiative built on TBI’s successful promotion of the High Conservation Value (HCV) approach among both public and private actors in Indonesia over the past decade. More than one million hectares of forestland are now managed as HCV areas, preventing further deforestation in these areas.

In this training and advocacy work, TBI cooperated with the Sustainable Trade Initiative and Flora and Fauna International and engaged closely with the District Development and Planning Agency (BAPPEDA) of Ketapang District. Bringing together local government and private and civil society partners paid off. BAPPEDA became very enthusiastic about the idea of an ecological corridor and introduced the plan to the West Kalimantan Province Forestry Office. In late 2017, the partners celebrated an important and tangible achievement: the Governor of West Kalimantan issued Decree No. 718. The decree contains guidelines for the determination of Essential Ecosystem Areas in Kayong Utara District and Ketapang District, which include the proposed ecological corridor. Once developed, this ecological corridor will connect HCV areas in the Sungai Putri production forest, where the orangutans are isolated, with the Gunung Palung National Park and Gunung Tarak Watershed protection forest. The animals will once again be able to roam freely in their natural habitat.
In the countries where TBI works, the focus more and more is on supporting sustainable development at the landscape level. In recent years, investments in integrated landscape initiatives have grown globally. Often these initiatives address governance issues; they try to improve the ways in which the interests of various stakeholders are weighed in decision-making and they promote rules that encourage the sustainable management of landscape resources. Fair and effective landscape governance is indeed key to achieving sustainable landscape development.

In 2017, TBI — together with EcoAgriculture Partners — developed the Landscape Governance Assessment Methodology. It is the first method to be developed for analysing and evaluating landscape governance specifically for integrated landscape initiatives. It is designed as a participatory tool with a multi-stakeholder approach. During an initial two-day workshop, various landscape stakeholders assess key performance criteria in landscape governance, such as inclusive and equitable decision-making and coordination among actors, sectors and scales. The workshop stimulates dialogue among the stakeholders, allowing them to learn about rules and decision-making processes and to identify strategies and actions based on a shared vision for improved landscape governance.

The methodology was developed in the framework of the Green Livelihoods Alliance (see page 6) and was tested and fine-tuned in thirteen workshops in nine countries: Bolivia, DR Congo, Ghana, Indonesia, Liberia, Nigeria, Philippines, Uganda and Viet Nam. The baseline reports that resulted from the assessment workshops will be compared to summary reports in 2020, to determine the contribution of the GLA programme to changes in governance.

The methodology, which is described in the publication Assessing Landscape Governance: A Participatory Approach, was presented at the Global Landscape Forum in Bonn.
Cross River State contains the richest rainforest areas in Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa. Much of Nigeria’s land has been cleared for agriculture. Cross River State has become the latest target of large-scale land acquisition. Multinational companies are establishing oil palm plantations along the fringes of forest reserves, exposing the remaining rainforests to threats of deforestation, degradation and biodiversity loss. Indigenous and forest-dwelling communities suffer the consequences of the harm done to their environment.

In 2017, TBI commissioned five reviews to better map and understand the history, policy aspects, and social and environmental impacts of oil palm expansion in Cross River State. The reviews were conducted in the framework of the Green Livelihoods Alliance (see page 6) and the findings were presented in the publication *Oil palm plantations in forest landscapes: impacts, aspirations and ways forward in Nigeria*.

The studies revealed that there are no clear governance guidelines for the oil palm sector in Nigeria. The national government suggests that it is trying to balance the contradictory priorities of rainforest conservation and economic development. However, it seems that in practice the ambition to generate revenue from palm oil and become a global leader in the palm oil industry is given the upper hand. In response, the researchers emphasise that the rights and welfare of forest-dwelling people must have priority in the palm oil policy process.

This means that local communities must be engaged as stakeholders in negotiations with the government and palm oil companies, and that their free, prior and informed consent for any development must be obtained. Moreover, the government must enforce the implementation of the environmental and social impact assessments that are required by law.

The researchers also recommended that NGOs, CSOs and academics establish a coalition specifically for research, advocacy and capacity building. The capacity-building activities should empower forest-dwelling communities to be heard in the conflicts related to oil palm expansion in Nigeria.
Local authorities can contribute significantly to achieving climate-smart landscapes. To do so, they need to adopt spatial and development policies that recognise the rights and interests of local people. One important aspect of land tenure is secure access to land and resources for local communities and smallholders. Secure tenure arrangements will provide an incentive for more sustainable use of land and resources. They will also strengthen local people’s negotiation position when dealing with governments and large-scale producers. TBI supports local authorities and communities to actively participate in decision-making processes regarding spatial and development policies to ensure that their voices are heard and their rights are respected:

- In 2017, TBI initiated participatory land use planning in Viet Nam to ensure that communities are involved in local government plans and their priorities are acknowledged.

- In Indonesia the views of villagers regarding access to natural resources and development priorities gathered as the result of Participatory Mapping (PM) and Participatory Conservation Planning (PCP) exercises are now taken into account by district and provincial planning agencies in their spatial planning processes.

- In Ghana, TBI succeeded in having natural resource management and climate resilience approaches included in the Medium-Term Development Plans of local governments.

- In Bolivia the Central Indígena de Comunidades de Lomerío (CICOL), with the support of Instituto Boliviano de investigación Forestal (IBIF), is able to identify forest management as a territorial priority and reformulate general forest management plans.

- In Colombia the knowledge documented by TBI and a traditional knowledge holder regarding the importance of the Chiribiquete National Park as a sacred site for indigenous groups contributed to the declaration of the park as a World Heritage Site.
Promoting inclusive landscape planning in the Central Highlands of Viet Nam

On paper, land-use planning in Viet Nam stipulates that all relevant stakeholders must be consulted. At the rural commune level, however, this rarely happens. As a result, ethnic minorities and other marginalised groups are sidelined and lack the commitment to implement and abide by spatial and land-use plans.

In Gung Re, a poor rural commune in Lam Dong province in the Central Highlands of Viet Nam, nearly half of the population belong to ethnic minorities. The villagers live on agricultural production, animal husbandry, fees for forest protection, and plantations. In recent years, people have started expanding coffee plantations. Some people encroached on the forest and illegally cut down trees to create coffee plantations. Others planted coffee trees in areas unsuitable for the crop. In all, nearly 400 ha of forestry land were converted for agricultural production. This unplanned expansion of arable land has created difficulties for the local authorities: it conflicts with official land-use plans and causes conflicts over land between local people and state forest enterprises. Moreover, the commune members who shifted to coffee production are vulnerable to price fluctuations.

A project run by Tropenbos Viet Nam and the Sustainable Trade Initiative in Gung Re commune has shown what truly participatory planning looks like. The project adopted a landscape approach and ensured the participation of all stakeholders: government managers, researchers, civil society organisations, and a diversity of local people from the commune. TBI organised multi-stakeholder meetings and workshops — from the district to commune and village level — to trigger interaction and a transparent sharing of ideas. See Box 1.

Box 1. Visualising land-use options

In the Gung Re project a 3D sandtable helped participants visualise land-use options. Spatial maps were created with input from the discussions; these further increased people’s understanding of the trade-offs between various land-use options. Commune members came to realise the importance of raising their voices on land-use issues. People said that they had never seen any land-use maps and had certainly never been asked to give their ideas. They were very pleased that they now understood the procedures and importance of the participatory planning process. They have started to negotiate their priorities against the demands of other actors. The authorities too are inspired by the approach. The vice-head of the District Department of Agriculture and Rural Development said: “I want PLUP to be upscaled in other areas of the district, as I can foresee the positive changes it will bring about.”
Increasing participation in Indonesia

In Indonesia, Tropenbos Indonesia conducted training in participatory mapping (PM) and participatory conservation planning (PCP) in the villages of Laman Satong and Pangkalan Jihing. Both methods were enthusiastically embraced by the communities. They used PM to establish clear village boundaries. Consensus on boundaries will help to avoid encroachment on nearby national park areas and protection forests and will reduce conflicts between neighbouring communities. PCP was used to develop a database of land-use types — such as rubber, oil palm and other agro-commodities — and to identify the potential of various natural resources for creating more sustainable livelihoods.

The exercises revealed that all land that is not oil palm plantation or national park is classified as forest land, which means it cannot be used for livelihood development. Representatives of Laman Satong village raised this issue at the National Tenure Conference in Jakarta, where officials took it to heart. In response to the needs of the villagers, Laman Satong has since become a pilot area for agrarian reform and social forestry. Both the district and provincial planning agencies have taken into account the villagers’ views regarding access to natural resources and their development priorities in their spatial planning processes.

Local-level planning in Ghana

In Ghana, Tropenbos Ghana contributed to a revised policy framework released by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) in late 2017. The framework is intended to guide local government assemblies in developing their Medium-Term Development Plans (MTDPs). Tropenbos Ghana lobbied for the incorporation of local plans into the MTDPs and provided technical insights into national and global strategies to address natural resource management and climate resilience challenges. In consultation with the NDPC, Tropenbos Ghana developed a manual and template for integrating natural resource and ecosystem service considerations into MTDPs. TBI then trained the planning officers of local government authorities in applying the template. Local government assemblies in the Juabeso Bia landscape have already adopted participatory planning and have integrated biodiversity, climate resilience and responsible natural resource approaches into their development plans.
Natural resource management in Bolivia

In Bolivia, TBI’s partner Instituto Boliviano de investigación Forestal (IBIF) helped to strengthen the role played by the Central Indígena de Comunidades de Lomerío (CICOL) in natural resource management of Lomerío’s indigenous territory, which is home to more than 6,000 Chiquitano people. Forestry and land management legislation introduced in 1996 granted large forest areas to indigenous communities. However, access to forest resources was limited and the communities could not fully govern their territories. CICOL therefore started building the administrative and technical capacities of the indigenous Forest Productive Association of Lomerío. With this support, the association will be able to contribute to reformulating the forest management plans to sustainably harvest timber in the territory. IBIF has also played a strategic role by sharing knowledge and by supporting key decision makers such as the Bolivian Forest Service to adapt the current forestry framework and national forest certification system. This has helped to create interest on the part of other community-based organisations in the Gran Chiquitania landscape to align their forest management plans with the national legal framework.

Chiribiquete National Park nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site

For several years, Tropenbos Colombia has been supporting local knowledge holders of various ethnic groups to document their knowledge about sacred sites and the spiritual relevance that these hold for communities in the Amazon. In 2017, together with Uldarico Matapi, who is a Upichia traditional knowledge holder, Tropenbos Colombia documented the importance of the Chiribiquete as a sacred site for more than twenty indigenous groups. Key to the cultural importance of this area are the numerous indigenous pictograms — the oldest of which date back 20,000 years — found in sixty rock shelters. The outcomes of the documentation study were published in the journal Colombia Amazonica.

The Colombian Institute for Anthropology and History and National Parks of Colombia used the documentation in their submission to have Chiribiquete National Park declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A decision is expected in July 2018.
In the Philippines, more than 30 stakeholders from the government, non-government and academic sectors participated in a course on landscape governance on Palawan. The course was organised by TBI, the Forest Foundation Philippines and the Center for Development Innovation at Wageningen University and Research as part of their new partnership programme to improve landscape governance. Forested landscapes in the Philippines are increasingly affected by climate change, and they require adaptation and mitigation measures that intensify the already growing competition over land and resources. During the workshop, the participants analysed the governance of their respective landscapes. The information from this analysis will feed into the development of the partnership programme in the coming years, which will focus on both landscape and national governance. The workshop mobilised the participants to start thinking in an integrated manner about landscape governance processes and to start driving these processes in the right direction.
Indigenous knowledge about the Amazonian catfish in Colombia

For more than two decades, Tropenbos Colombia has dedicated itself to documenting local knowledge through supporting research conducted by indigenous communities in the mid-Caquetá region of Colombia. Indigenous peoples’ knowledge of flora and fauna species and their ecological relationships is exceptionally detailed since it is rooted in their close, long-time interaction with their habitat. TBI encourages western scientists to integrate indigenous knowledge into their research. TBI also promotes the documentation of indigenous knowledge—such as maps, drawings and oral narrations—to encourage public institutions to include indigenous communities and their knowledge in decision-making processes about their territory and its conservation.

For more than two decades, the fisherman Luis Angel Trujillo, the indigenous biologist and artist Confucio Hernandez, from the Uitoto group and Carlos Rodríguez, director of Tropenbos Colombia, have been documenting traditional knowledge of the seven big Amazonian catfishes. Their material includes information on the anatomy, life cycle and ecological relationships of the catfish, as well as a list of species on which the catfish feeds. Their work has contributed important new knowledge to western science. In 2017, their information and illustrations were presented at several symposia and events. The Colombian scientific community emphasised the relevance of the work to the advancement of the conservation of tropical forests in Colombia.

In 2018, a book will be published that brings together the documented knowledge, accompanied with illustrations by Confucio Hernandez. TBI hopes that the publication of *Piraiba: Ecología ilustrada del gran bagre amazónico* will inspire universities to include the study of traditional knowledge in their curricula and that public institutions will include the local knowledge of traditional fishermen in their decision-making processes.
The private sector is crucial for achieving climate-smart landscapes. Companies can contribute by adopting sustainability standards and commitments. Innovative models and financing mechanisms for integrated landscape management are needed in order to develop business approaches that conserve forests and trees, and to address the interests of smallholders and local communities. TBI — together with investors and private companies — designs innovative financing mechanisms and business models for smallholders:

In 2017, TBI triggered international debate about the role of the private and financial sectors through two publications and associated seminars in the Netherlands and Germany. The first publication focused on investments in smallholders and the second on the challenges of zero deforestation commitments (Box 2).
Investing in smallholders: from “do no harm” to “do good”

More than three-quarters of the world’s food is produced by small-scale farmers, who are also guardians of the landscapes they live in and live off. They could produce even more if they could attract additional investment.

Most investors are held back by the risk of uncertain financial returns. They think that working with smallholders is too risky and complicated. For most investors, scale is important, which is another reason they ignore smallholders. But although smallholders are indeed small in size, they are large in numbers. Engaging with them effectively makes it possible to scale up.

A shift in skills and mind-set is needed, as set out in the working paper Improving the positive impacts of investments on smallholder livelihoods and the landscapes they live in, published in June 2017. TBI co-authored the paper with the Dutch Development Bank, Hivos International and the Royal Tropical Institute, all in the Netherlands. It was the result of a two-year exploration of alternative tenure arrangements and inclusive business models that focused on improving smallholder livelihoods and tenure security.

The authors encourage investors to move from a “do no harm” risk mitigation approach to a “do good” impact approach. They provide examples of projects and investment funds that are already financing or implementing alternative business models for activities with smallholders. The cases show that these activities also have positive social and environmental impacts.

The paper was presented at a seminar with members of the Dutch Land Governance Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue and at the Global Landscapes Forum in Bonn, Germany (see below). The discussions with national and international stakeholders yielded a rich harvest of cases and insights that will contribute to an updated version of the paper.

Box 2. Zero deforestation: a commitment to change

The effects of tropical deforestation on climate change and development are a key concern of our time. A large part of deforestation is caused by the conversion of tropical forests for the industrial production of agricultural commodities. A growing number of companies and governments today are making ambitious zero deforestation pledges to eliminate deforestation from agricultural supply chains.

Committing to zero deforestation is necessary and laudable, but it is also an enormously complex challenge. Most initiatives are still in the experimental stages. To pull together state-of-the art knowledge and experiences, TBI devoted the 58th issue of ETFRN News to the topic.

“Zero deforestation: a commitment to change” presents more than 200 pages of firsthand insights and policy analysis by a wide range of international experts. Case studies present corporate experiences across a range of commodity value chains, as well as examples of how companies and smallholders are working together to build deforestation-free supply chains. Public commitments and their implementation are reviewed, including socio-economic and environmental impacts and trade-offs. The publication also looks at the linkages between private commitments and government policy and how transnational and civil society initiatives help or hinder these. Eight recommendations are given for enhancing the implementation, effectiveness and impact of existing and future zero deforestation commitments.
TBI co-hosted the Inclusive Landscapes Finance Pavilion at the Global Landscapes Forum in Bonn, Germany. Together with CGIAR’s Global Research programme on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (see page 6), the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), Finance Alliance for Sustainable Trade (FAST) and the Forest and Farm Facility, TBI convened a panel discussion on the opportunities and challenges of upscaling inclusive finance and business models. The discussion built on the paper about this topic co-authored and published by TBI earlier in 2017 (see Improving the positive impacts of investments on smallholder livelihoods and the landscapes they live in in the List of Publications, page 32). Forty people shared their viewpoints in Bonn; another fifty followed the discussion online.

It seems that the time is ripe for investors to move from “do no harm” to “do good.” This means that companies and investors must upgrade their policies on corporate social and environmental responsibility. It also means that more knowledge is needed on viable business and finance models that both make a profit and improve livelihoods, land rights and the entrepreneurial potential of smallholders, small enterprises and communities.

The main conclusion from the panel discussion was that the success of do-good approaches depends on collaboration and connections. This concerns all actors: local and international financial organisations need to join forces; farmers need to organise themselves; investors need to adjust their requirements to accommodate smallholders; companies need to engage neighbouring communities; and smallholders need to be connected to financial institutions. If all these actors team up, it will be possible to reach scale. It is also important for the private sector to start considering the natural environment as the foundation for long-term business viability, rather than being solely the interest of civil society and advocacy groups.
Achieving climate-smart landscapes is more likely if civil society organisations and community-based organisations have the capacity and information to carry out their important roles in the processes of change at the landscape level. TBI works with CSOs and CBOs as representatives of local communities and smallholders to train them to operate as watchdogs and as partners in innovation:

- In Indonesia, partnerships were established between the community, an oil palm company and TBI with the purpose of developing new livelihood opportunities that supplement people’s income from working at the nearby oil palm plantation.

- In 2017, TBI successfully trained timber producing communities and their organisations in Ghana to design Social Responsibility Agreements and hold timber companies accountable for complying with them.
Women initiate a successful mushroom business in Indonesia

In 2017, Tropenbos Indonesia initiated a partnership between the village of Laman Satong in West Kalimantan and the oil palm company PT Kayong Agro Lestari, which owns the nearby oil palm plantation. The purpose was twofold. The first goal was to increase the income of women by creating alternative livelihood options. Most women depend economically on their husbands, who work at the oil palm plantation. Second, if incomes increase, the surrounding forest will be less threatened, since the villagers will be less dependent on the extraction of natural resources from the forest for their daily survival.

A pilot organic mushroom farm run by women’s groups in Laman Satong was started, as well as a nursery for the restoration of corridor areas. The oil palm company provided the funds to build the mushroom house, while Tropenbos Indonesia facilitated the preparation of the growing medium for the mushrooms, mentored the daily care of the mushrooms, and taught the women harvesting techniques and post-harvesting production options such as processing the mushrooms into snacks.

The pilot has demonstrated that non-palm oil livelihoods are possible. The women harvest a total of three to four kilograms of mushrooms every day. They supply fresh mushrooms to the local market and to the kitchen of the oil palm company. This generates an extra income of 30,000 rupiahs per kilo. The benefits for the women are not merely financial. The project has also strengthened their self-confidence and they have gained recognition from the village government.

Word of the success of the mushroom farm is spreading fast. Women’s groups from other villages have been visiting the mushroom house and wish to start a similar business in their own villages. The Gunung Palung National Park authorities plan to replicate the business in villages surrounding the park, while the local NGO ASRI wants to introduce the model in its chainsaw buyback programme.
Communities in Ghana hold timber companies accountable

In Ghana, timber companies and timber producing communities are obliged to sign Social Responsibility Agreements (SRAs). The agreements are intended to compensate the communities for their contribution to forest resource management. The SRAs also require the timber companies to allocate 5% of their stumpage fees to development projects in the communities. However, a survey conducted by Tropenbos Ghana in 39 timber producing communities in the Western and Brong-Ahafo regions revealed that very few signed SRAs are being implemented.

The main problem is that most communities are not aware of the national SRA guidelines and are rarely involved in drafting the terms of the agreements. Paramount chiefs often act as the sole negotiators with the timber companies, even though this goes against the guidelines. There are very few SRA committees at the village level that oversee the implementation of the agreements and as a result, most timber companies get away with ignoring the SRAs. At the same time, some of the obligations for timber companies are simply unrealistic.

Tropenbos Ghana decided that it was time to train timber producing communities. The first goal was to support communities in designing SRAs with realistic obligations for both parties. The second goal was to help communities hold the timber companies accountable for complying with these obligations. TBI organised capacity-building workshops in the two regions. Community-based organisations (CBOs) enhanced peoples’ skills in SRA negotiations and in advocacy against non-fulfilment of the SRAs. Community members also learned about forest law and have started to hold law enforcement agencies accountable for monitoring the operations of mining and logging companies.

The CBOs themselves also started monitoring both public and private in the timber sector. They inspected logging licences to ensure compliance and reduce illegalities. In several cases, this has already had tangible results. Timber producing communities have managed to renegotiate existing SRAs with the timber companies and have agreed on procedures for effective implementation of the agreements.
Smallholders and local entrepreneurs will be more effective if they are members of forest and farm producer organisations (FFPOs). These groups are well organised to represent smallholder interests in negotiations with public, private and civic actors. In this way, the producer organisations can also contribute to a conducive context for achieving climate-smart landscapes. TBI supports producer organisations of smallholders to organise in associations and to obtain the right skills to be able to stand up for their rights, compete in the sector and comply with national and international standards and commitments.

• In the past years, TBI has worked hard to support the artisanal milling sector in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) and Ghana. In both countries, artisanal milling is gaining acceptance as an alternative to illegal chainsaw logging. If artisanal millers are organised, this increases the chances that their voices will be heard and their rights will be respected. This in turn will contribute to national efforts to legalise the timber sector in the context of FLEGT-VPA, while also strengthening the domestic timber market. In 2017, important steps forward were taken in both countries.

• Another significant success in Ghana was a new legal provision that grants artisanal timber millers logging rights to small areas of forests that do not qualify for conventional Timber Utilization Contracts (see Box 3).
The voice of artisanal loggers in eastern DR Congo is being heard

TBI has been working to promote and legalise the artisanal milling sector in DR Congo since 2010. This includes supporting artisanal loggers in what was then Province Orientale to organise themselves into legal associations. Being organised is a vital condition for the artisanal logging sector to survive and thrive. Together, it is easier for the loggers to tackle the challenges they face in their daily operations, and to understand and comply with forest regulations and administration. This enhances the legality of the sector. At the same time, because the loggers can speak with one voice, they are in a much better position to negotiate their position with the authorities. This too is vital; for many years, artisanal loggers have faced all sorts of irregularities in their dealings with the authorities, especially when it came to paying taxes and fees or submitting logging permits.

TBI developed a directory of legal taxes, which has helped artisanal loggers defend themselves against administrative abuses by civil servants. One specific success was achieved in 2017. During a workshop in Bafwasende on landscape governance organised by Tropenbos DR Congo, artisanal loggers expressed their frustration about the state authorities in North Kivu province. These authorities demanded that loggers who were transporting their wood from Ituri and Tshopo provinces pay the same felling taxes that they had already paid in their own province. The loggers decided to take action. On 2 August, representatives of the loggers from Tshopo and Ituri approached the Directorate-General for Revenues and the National Forest Fund of North Kivu and lobbied against the payment of the felling tax for wood in transit. Their grievances were considered legitimate and the Directorate-General decided that the logging tax would no longer be charged for wood in transit from either province.
Artisanal milling can boost local economies in Ghana

For several years, Tropenbos Ghana has lobbied policymakers throughout Ghana to adopt artisanal milling as the preferred method for small and medium-scale milling as an alternative to chainsaw milling, which is banned in the country but still practised. To reinforce these lobbying efforts, Tropenbos Ghana decided to investigate the economic viability of artisanal milling using the Net Present Value (NPV) method. This method measures the difference between the present value of cash inflows or investments in a project or business, and the present value of cash outflows or profits. The research focused on three artisanal mills located in the Juaso and Goaso forest districts. All three mills proved to have a positive NPV, which indicates that they are profitable businesses. The mills also boosted the economies of local communities.

As part of the study, stakeholders across the two forest districts were interviewed to assess the social and environmental impacts of artisanal milling:

- 77% of the 110 stakeholders interviewed said that the artisanal mills provided both direct and indirect employment;
- 20% said artisanal milling improved access to fuelwood;
- in terms of environmental impacts, 21% complained about sawdust air pollution, 37% about noise and 21% mentioned deforestation as a negative consequence; and
- 24% of the stakeholders saw no negative impacts from artisanal milling.

To address the problem of deforestation and the destruction of farmland, TBI has assisted artisanal millers to establish nurseries and grow trees for afforestation activities. Artisanal millers have also been trained in agro-forestry, planting trees together with food crops to reduce the impact of their activities on farming.

The outcomes of the study will be published as the book Prospects of the Artisanal Milling Concept in Ghana in 2018. It will reinforce ongoing lobbying for adoption of the artisanal milling concept.

Social and environmental impacts of artisanal milling*

- **77%** said artisanal mills provided employment
- **20%** said artisanal milling improved access to fuelwood
- **21%** complained about sawdust air pollution
- **37%** about noise
- **21%** mentioned deforestation as a negative consequence
- **24%** saw no negative impacts

*110 stakeholders interviewed
Artisanal timber millers are the key suppliers to Ghana’s domestic timber market. However, they have only limited access to commercial timber from production forests. This access is provided by means of Timber Utilisation Contracts (TUCs). TUCs are granted through a competitive bidding process that puts artisanal millers at a disadvantage. They lack the financial capacity to compete for contracts against the large-scale traditional millers.

Civil society organisations led by Tropenbos Ghana have lobbied for a legal provision to address this unfair situation. A significant success came in 2017, when the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources introduced a legal provision under the Timber Resource Management and Legality Licensing Regulations 2017 (LI 2254). It provides for the granting of small areas of forests that do not qualify for a conventional TUCs to artisanal millers as Small-Scale TUCs. Procedures for the acquisition of Small-Scale Timber Rights are included in the provision.

This step forward in improving the supply of legal lumber to Ghana’s domestic market is also important from an international perspective. It addresses the scarcity of legal lumber on Ghana’s domestic market, which is a major threat to the successful implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between Ghana and the European Union.

The new provision may help address some of the problems that still exist in the artisanal timber sector. A nationwide survey that TBI conducted in 2017 among 221 artisanal millers showed that 35 percent of them still sourced their timber illegally. It also found that 91% of the millers were registered with the Timber Industry Development Division of the Forestry Commission. Those who were not registered were either in the process of registering or had only recently installed their machines. In addition, 81% of the mills surveyed produced solely for the domestic market. The survey made it clear that the people who operate small-scale mills need training in business management as well as technical skills. They also need more knowledge of basic forestry policies, laws and regulations.

Based on this information, Tropenbos Ghana called on the Forestry Commission Training Centre to partner with the Timber Industry Development Division to build the capacity of small-scale mills for more efficient wood processing. TBI also recommended that guidelines be developed for linking small-scale millers to TUC holders to provide access to legal lumber for processing to supply the domestic market in accordance with the regulations of the VPA. This would also help to support TBI’s call for a national upscaling of the artisanal timber milling concept.


Owusu, E. 2017. Smallholder Farmers Should be Empowered to Respond Effectively to Tree Plantation Development Initiatives. Kumasi, Ghana: Tropenbos Ghana


Pham Huu, Ty and Tran Huu, Nghi. 2017. Hydropower plant development and forest recompensing plantation in Viet Nam. Hue, Viet Nam: Tropenbos Viet Nam.


Outreach and engagement

- over 32 events organized with more than 1300 participants (Stakeholder meetings, seminars, conferences and exhibitions)
- 23 workshops organized with over 539 participants
- 453 people trained through 28 courses
- 105,181 page views on tropenbos.org
- 954 likes on Facebook, 9945 people reached through posts
- 567 followers on Twitter, 151 mentions
- 2031 followers on LinkedIn
Financial summary

In 2017, TBI received major programme funding from the Directorate General for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) of the Netherlands, and from the European Union. A range of other donors also supported TBI’s work. TBI’s partners in the network provide substantial contributions in kind, such as office space and/or equipment. They also make researchers and relevant expertise available.

### Revenues

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<td>European Union</td>
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### Donors to TBI - the Netherlands

- Directorate General for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) of the Netherlands
- European Union (EU)
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ)
- Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands (LNV)
- CGIAR Global Research programme on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA)
TBI is governed by an international General Board composed of respected Dutch and international experts drawn from the research, policy, business and development communities.

**Prof. E.H. Bulte***
Professor, Development Economics Group, Wageningen UR, the Netherlands

**Dr. J.R. Cobbinah**
Chief Research Scientist, Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG), Ghana

**Dr. C.M. Hooymans*** (Chair)
Former Governing Board, Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (TNO)

**Dr. M.M. Goote***
CEO, Dobecology, the Netherlands

* Member of the Executive Board
By making knowledge work for forests and people, Tropenbos International contributes to well-informed decision making for improved management and governance of forests and trees in climate-smart landscapes. Our longstanding local presence and ability to bring together local, national and international partners make us a trusted partner in sustainable development.