



FACT SHEET

FORESTS FOR LIFE: Forestry and Livelihoods

Did you know?

- About 1.6 billion people worldwide depend on forests for some part of their livelihood, and billions more benefit from cleaner air and water, climate change mitigation, regulation of floods and storms, and global markets for timber and food.
- Forests are home to an estimated 80 percent of all terrestrial plants and animals, including natural wonders like cloud forests and gorillas which draw millions of tourists annually and generate billions of dollars.
- Forests regulate the quality and quantity of freshwater in a landscape, providing a critical resource for people, wildlife, industry, livestock, crop irrigation, and even hydropower.
- Intact forests are the source of traditional and modern medicines, and the wild relatives of domestic crops that are needed for their constant genetic reinvigoration, while deforestation and land degradation have been correlated with higher incidence of malaria and other diseases.
- Upland forests, riverside buffer zones, and coastal mangroves are tied to marine ecosystems that provide one of the major sources of protein and livelihoods for billions of people in developing countries.
- Forests often function as the “supermarket of last resort” in times of conflict, economic distress or natural disasters.

What is USAID doing to make forests work for people?

- With USAID assistance, community concessions in the Mayan Biosphere Reserve of **Guatemala** have become the world’s first source of certified sustainable *xate*, a palm undergrowth used in flower arrangements. *Xate* leaves sold for \$570,000 in 2010, an important source of income for women in particular that helps whole communities value and maintain healthy forests.
- In FY2008, over 70,000 indigenous shade trees were planted in **Côte d’Ivoire** to partially reestablish natural forest cover and improve management of more than 13,000 hectares of cacao agroforestry systems, a prerequisite to eco-friendly chocolate certification and higher revenues.
- In **Afghanistan**, investments in forest and rangeland management by Community Conservation Committees in FY2009 generated more than 17,500 jobs and increased productivity of pistachios and other products by at least 40 percent.
- In **El Salvador**, USAID helped the private sector manage complex certification requirements for coffee, simultaneously improving incomes and sustainability. During two years of investment in 2007 and 2008, over 900 coffee producers on nearly 300 farms and processing plants achieved shade-grown, fair-trade certification, improving management of more than 10,000 hectares of agroforestry systems. Producers earn a price premium for certification, which in 2007 helped earn \$3.8 million from nearly a million pounds of coffee.

- USAID/**Mali** works with the Peace Corps to help rural households manage the Shea tree, whose valuable nuts are used for food and sold to bring in much needed income, especially to women.
- In **Bolivia**, USAID helped build more than 50 strategic alliances between indigenous or community forest operators and the private sector, and supported the allocation of 350 land titles to 4 million hectares of forest.