



# The institutionalization of Bangladesh Forest Inventory

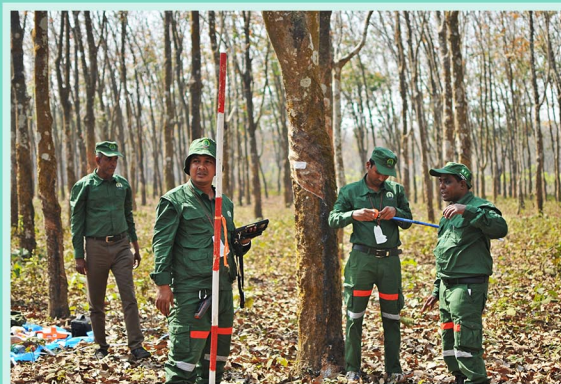
Supporting sustainable forest management and conservation

*Forest Inventories were traditionally carried out under short-term donor aided 'projects'. Irregular and inconsistent forest inventories hinder the sustainable management of forest resources. Monitoring forest change, planning and decision making in forestry and natural resources management requires sustainable and institutionalized forest monitoring system.*

## Context

The Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD) with more than 10,000 people, of which 80% are engaged in field level under the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC) leads actions to improve forest management and conservation, adopting forward thinking, innovative approaches in its management of approximately 1.6 million hectares of land across the country. The BFD is the prime agency to carry out the assessment of the national forest resources. It is the mandate of the BFD to collect, analyze and disseminate information about tree and forest resources.

In 2016, the Bangladesh Forest Inventory (BFI) was launched with the objective to assess and monitor tree and forest changes over time. Field inventory, remote sensing and socio-economic survey data have been integrated to provide results for a multitude of purposes including the valuation of ecosystem services. To ensure the consistency of forest assessment in time, the robustness of the results communicated, the institutionalization of the Bangladesh Forest Inventory is required. By identifying the necessary technical, human and financial resources for the BFI operationalization, capacitating technical staff, clarifying roles and mandates, supervisory roles and collaborations, the institutionalization process makes the BFI sustainable.



Field data collection from BFI inventory team.

## Objectives

- To transform a project-based inventory team to a permanent BFI unit with clear roles and responsibilities.
- To develop of a versatile toolbox of techniques and methods useful for national level forest assessments, and remote sensing technology.
- To establish collaborations with other agencies and institutions for the full operationalization of the BFI.

## Process

- **Identify technical, financial and human capacities:** BFI institutionalization is driven by interests of many stakeholders, it involves many actors and it draws upon a suite of data and information sources, including remote sensing, field observations, existing maps, reports and other documents and expert information.
- **Strengthen national capacities:** : The financial, human and technical resources available in BFD were assessed. Appropriate trainings, equipment and recommendations for recruitment were provided to BFD.
- **Develop a BFI unit at the BFD:** A national forest monitoring system working group was established in BFD to guide the development of the BFI unit in consultation with the, as well as public universities and other technical agencies.
- **Strengthen institutional arrangements:** While the establishment of the BFI Unit rests with the BFD, other national entities are directly and indirectly support the process. Agreements with other national entities such as with the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics were established to make the BFI a sustainable process and usable by other national entities.



Transfer of BFI equipment, training materials and manual to Khulna and Chittagong University by the Bangladesh Forest Department.

## Results

- **Capacity of BFD personnel and forest related entities strengthened:** More than 850 technical staff involved in forest related capacity building activities since 2016. In addition, about 100 BFD staff trained for forest mensuration, 20 for socio-economic survey, seven for DGPS and 25 for data analysis and remote sensing.
- **BFD developed an organizational reform for implementation of BFI:** A sustainable organizational structure for forest assessment and monitoring has been developed.
- **The institutionalization of the BFI was initiated:** To establish a permanent BFI, FAO supported the BFD in a range of activities such as composition of field teams, training and data collection, quality control, field work supervision, data processing, and other recommendations for forming a BFI unit in BFD. After government approval of the BFD re-organogram and recruitment rules for new BFI staff, the unit will be established.

## Selected references

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