

Pre-announcement IAC-WU Seminar 2002

**Adaptive Management for Biodiversity Conservation:
a collective learning approach in conditions of social and
ecological change**

Welcome to this year's IAC-WU Seminar on Adaptive Management for Biodiversity Conservation. The seminar is part of the IAC Training Programme on Leadership and Adaptive Management in Forest Environments (LAMFE), to be held from September to November 2002. In this programme we bring together people from organisations involved in natural resources management to explore new ways towards sound and equitable land use. At the occasion of this seminar, audience from the Netherlands and abroad will join the international participants of the LAMFE training programme.

Biodiversity conservation is one of the important issues of this year's international environmental policy debate. Parties to the Convention of Biodiversity Conservation are meeting in April in The Hague to discuss the progress made. The topic is also one of the major subjects of our LAMFE training programme. Therefore, we want to focus this year's seminar on adaptive management as an approach which balances biodiversity conservation and livelihood sustainability.

Biodiversity conservation is only one of the many interests of different stakeholders in the use of natural resources. These stakeholders often have competing interests in the use and conservation of various natural resources. The interests depend on both regional ecological and socio-economic conditions, livelihood conditions of local communities and institutional arrangements for managing the natural resources. At present these conditions are often undergoing a rapid change. The complex and dynamic interactions between these conditions make decision-making for biodiversity conservation prone to uncertainty and surprise. Adaptive management addresses this situation by involving stakeholders in a decision-making process based on experiential learning. Active monitoring and feedback from the results of decisions are core aspects of this iterative process. Learning takes place collectively and is therefore also called social or collaborative learning.

At this seminar we will explore the potential of adaptive management to create space for biodiversity conservation in decision-making at the local level. This is particularly important when considering biodiversity conservation in conditions where local people's livelihoods are at stake, and where poverty, land degradation and loss of biodiversity have entered a vicious spiral.

Some of the issues to explore are: What is the potential of social learning for change, aiming both at improved livelihood and biodiversity conservation? How to facilitate a collaborative process involving actors with very different agendas? What are the implications of social learning for the formulation and adaptation of management plans? What management types are most appropriate in different circumstances? What is needed in terms of institutional environment, leadership and organisational change? Which kind of

conflicts can we expect at different levels and how to deal with these conflicts? What is the influence of market forces and of external policies? How can networking and knowledge management contribute to upscaling the lessons learnt? In order to explore the opportunities and limitations, we will support our discussions with appropriate case materials.

The International Agricultural Centre (IAC) organises this seminar in collaboration with Wageningen University and other institutions and organisations in the Netherlands. The seminar will be held from 21-23 October 2002 in Wageningen, the Netherlands. The closing date for application is 15 September 2002. More information can be obtained from Ms. E. Rippen at the following e-mail address: e.rippen@iac.agro.nl, by fax: +31-317-495395, or from our website: www.iac.wageningen-ur.nl.