

Internship at CIFOR 2014

Plantation development and forest conservation

Background information about CIFOR (<http://www.cifor.org>)

The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) is a nonprofit, global facility dedicated to advancing human wellbeing, environmental conservation and equity. We conduct research that enables more informed and equitable decision making about the use and management of forests in less-developed countries.

Our research and expert analysis help policy makers and practitioners shape effective policy, improve the management of tropical forests and address the needs and perspectives of people who depend on forests for their livelihoods. Our multidisciplinary approach considers the underlying drivers of deforestation and degradation which often lie outside the forestry sector: forces such as agriculture, infrastructure development, trade and investment policies and law enforcement.

Description of the internship

The alleged capacity of productive forest plantations to provide an alternative source of fiber and hence to alleviate pressure on natural forests, is a recurrent argument that has never been properly demonstrated. Indeed it involves more complex dynamics and interactions than just a mechanical substitution between two sources of timber supply, just as research has shown for the similar debate about land sparing for agriculture. Not only do markets and types of plantations matter, from multifunctional plantations supplying local markets to larger estates focused on fiber production on globalized markets; but the scale of the analysis is also critical as local or global impacts might be contrasted in terms of forest conservation.

Forest plantations are under scrutiny for their assumed and sometimes real adverse impacts on the environment and society. This research/project will thus be devoted to an extensive literature review to provide an overview of the diversity of methodological approaches applied so far to test the assumption of more forest plantations leading to less natural forest degradation and deforestation. The leading research question will be: "What are the methodological limits and possible improvements to inform plantation-related policies for forest conservation?".

This issue needs to be reviewed in order to inform policies in the forestry sector because the policy context could augment or reduce the chances of plantation development to alleviate pressure on natural forests.

Requirements and deliverables

The internship is expected to last for about 5 months, in spring-summer 2014.



The intern will be based in CIFOR Headquarters in Indonesia.

The intern will have a background in forestry and knowledge of environmental policies and/or environmental economics. Knowledge in econometrics would be an asset.

The compulsory final product of this research will be an MSc report. Another publication should also be pursued as an objective depending on progress made over the course of the internship, policy brief or scientific article.

Application and supervision

The intern will work under the supervision of the senior scientist Romain Pirard, r.pirard@cgiar.org

All applications should be sent to the supervisor, and include a CV and letter of interest.