

SECTOR Note

SECTOR's knowledge and expertise

The concept of skills testing and certification has been implemented successfully in several countries. To improve working conditions as well as safety and health and to lay a basis for training, the ILO promotes the concept of national codes of forest practices. For environmental reasons, industry and governments in many countries have shown interest in ILO advisory services in the formulation of such codes. There have also been positive experiences with approaches to labour inspection in forestry based on check-lists.

Work study and applied ergonomics in forestry have been the mainstays of the technical cooperation and publication activities in forestry. Poor design of work methods and inappropriate technology often result in high workloads and low productivity. Experience has shown that improvements in working conditions can be profitable investments benefiting workers and employers.

To foster exchange of information and cooperation among those interested in forestry workforce issues, SECTOR has established a [Forestry Experts Network \(FORWORKNET\)](#) with almost 300 members in 70 countries. The network has a membership register with search indices and periodically issues a technical update.

In 1991 a tripartite sectoral meeting considered technological change and training in forestry, and its conclusions remain valid as international guidelines on the subject. In 1992 another tripartite sectoral meeting addressed a broad range of social and labour issues in the pulp and paper industry; its conclusions also remain relevant. Subsequent tripartite meetings were held in 1997 and 2001, focusing respectively on the development of a [code of practice on safety and health in forestry work](#), and on the [social and labour dimensions of forest and wood industries](#).

The most recent tripartite meeting was held in January 2005, as mentioned in the previous item.

Other work has concentrated on small enterprises and the informal sector. "Industrial districts" can provide a useful model for cooperation between small enterprises. Some of the best known industrial districts developed around wood industries in Italy and Denmark. The concept would appear to have potential for developing countries as well. Furthermore, SECTOR is collaborating with ILO's Department for Job Creation and Enterprise Development on forestry-related local economic development.