

INREM Alumni Capacity Building and Networking Seminar

Forest and Landscape Transformation Challenges in
the Anthropocene

02.11. – 08.11.2025, Dresden/Tharandt, Germany



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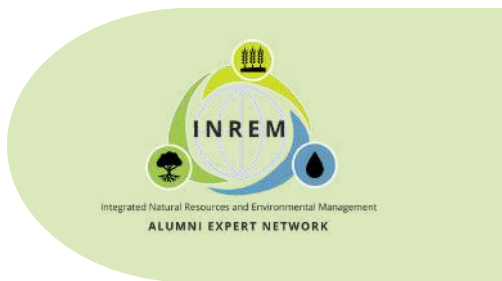
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Seminar Coordination



Welcome Message



Welcome to the INREM Alumni Networking Seminar in Tharandt/Dresden, Germany!

We are delighted to welcome scientists and practitioners from around the world to this seminar. You come from a wide range of fields—working in universities, research institutions, government agencies, civil society organizations, development cooperation, and the private sector. Despite your diverse backgrounds, you all share a common interest: a commitment to the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment.

We look forward to a dynamic exchange of ideas and an engaging interdisciplinary dialogue throughout the seminar here in Tharandt and Dresden.

This seminar is designed to foster interaction, collaboration, and knowledge sharing among participants. It brings together professionals and academics from 20 countries and various disciplines—such as forestry, water management

The programme includes a mix of scientific sessions, symposiums, excursions, and social events to encourage meaningful discussion and lasting connections. In the following pages, you will find:

- Profile-style introductions of all participants
- An overview of the seminar schedule
- Details of key activities, including the main seminar day, field excursion, the Tropical Forestry 30-Year Anniversary Symposium, and the Alumni-Student Career Centre.

We are thrilled to have you with us and wish you an inspiring and rewarding experience.

Let the learning and networking begin!

Program Overview

DAY 1

Sunday, 2 November 2025

Arrival Day in Dresden

Participants arrive in Dresden individually and check in to the Meininger Hotel (Wiener Platz 5, 01069 Dresden).

DAY 2

Monday, 3 November 2025

Seminar: Adaptive Forest Management and Post-Mining Landscapes in the Global South

The first day of the seminar begins with participant registration, followed by opening remarks and introductions. This day sets the stage for our thematic journey by providing an overview of the seminar's two main focus areas: adaptive forest management and the transformation of post-mining landscapes.

In the afternoon, we will dive into two thematic sessions led by alumni speakers. The first session will focus on the impacts of climate change on forestry, highlighting approaches and experiences from the Global South. The second session will explore the challenges and opportunities of mining and post-mining landscape management, again with a regional emphasis on the Global South.

Between the two sessions, we will take a break for a special occasion: the planting of a climate-resilient tree, commemorating 30 years of the MSc program in Tropical Forestry at TU Dresden—a symbolic act reflecting both our history and our shared commitment to a sustainable future.

Please remember to bring your boarding pass from your flight to Germany for registration in the morning, as it is required for administrative purposes.



DAY 3

Tuesday, 4 November 2025

Excursion I: Climate-smart forestry : Forest adaptation and transformation in Saxony

The effects of climate change on Germany's forests have become increasingly evident and severe in recent years. Rising temperatures, prolonged periods of drought, and more erratic precipitation are placing growing pressure on forest ecosystems and challenging traditional forest management approaches. In particular, Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), one of the most economically important tree species in modern German forestry, is suffering widespread dieback in many areas. Responding to this, Germany's forest administrations are actively seeking climate-smart forestry strategies including tree species that are more resilient to future conditions.

This excursion focuses on an example of forest adaptation in the Ore Mountains of Saxony using a native tree species with strong potential to withstand the impacts of climate change while delivering both ecological, economic and social benefits: the silver fir (*Abies alba*, German: Weißtanne). Once almost extinct in the region due to centuries of overexploitation and browsing by game and livestock, silver fir is now being reconsidered as a key species for climate-resilient forest development. Around 80 years ago, forestry master Michler planted silver fir in addition to the then-obligatory pure, even-aged spruce stands. Today, these mature firs stand as living evidence of the species' resilience and suitability for future forest ecosystems under changing climatic conditions.

We will travel approximately 90 minutes west to the village of Gelenau, located in the Neudorf State Forestry District. There, the day will begin with an introduction to the regional context and the silvicultural challenges currently facing forest managers.



Our field visits will explore the reintroduction of silver fir through advance planting methods in semi-mature spruce stands, demonstrating how the fir performs under the canopy cover of non-climate-resilient trees. These stops will effectively form a time series, illustrating various stages of fir silviculture and showing how the species can be gradually integrated into existing forest systems.

In addition to the silvicultural aspect, we will visit a planting trial established in 1994, where silver firs from different provenances were planted to study their growth performance. Now 30 years old, these trees offer valuable insights into the effects of genetic origin and inbreeding on the success of forest regeneration. We will also visit a specially managed fir plantation for seed production, as well as a nursery dedicated to the propagation of silver fir.



As we will spend a considerable amount of time outdoors in the forest—where it can already be cold and wet at this time of year—you are strongly advised to wear sturdy footwear and warm, weather-appropriate outdoor clothing.



DAY 4

Wednesday, 5 November 2025

Excursion II: Integrated post-mining landscape and socioeconomic transformation in the Lusatia

Building on Monday's presentations and discussions, this one-day excursion offers insights into the post-mining landscape rehabilitation of Lusatia (Lausitz) and corresponding the region's ongoing socio-economic transformation. Located in eastern Germany, Lusatia has been a center of lignite (brown coal) mining since the mid-19th century. Mining became especially prominent after World War II, when the region experienced a dramatic expansion of open-cast lignite extraction to meet the energy demands of the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

At its peak in the 1980s, more than 200 million tons of lignite were mined annually, employing around 80,000 people and making lignite mining the region's dominant economic force.

The lignite industry profoundly shaped the society and identity of the region. Following Germany's reunification in 1989, during the 1990s much of the mining activity was phased out during due to economic restructuring, modernization of energy production, and the urgent need to address the severe environmental impacts of lignite mining. Since then, lignite production in Lusatia has declined by over 70%. More recently, in line with Germany's climate goals and energy transition policies, a complete phase-out of lignite-based energy production in Lusatia is planned by 2038.

In response to this decline, the region has undergone a dramatic transformation over the past 35 years.

Extensive landscape rehabilitation efforts have converted former mining pits into Europe's largest artificial lake district, surrounded by reforested and recultivated land. This evolving landscape not only reflects environmental restoration, but also marks a shift in the region's economic and social development—from a reliance on heavy industry to emerging sectors such as tourism, renewable energy, and high-tech manufacturing.



Our one-day excursion will begin in the morning with a visit to the Welzow open-cast mining site, followed by visits to several adjacent rehabilitated areas. We will learn about the technical and ecological aspects of post-mining rehabilitation, including soil preparation, ground water management, species selection for forest-based restoration, and long-term management strategies.



Lunch will be served at the Der Leuchtturm tourism and conference resort, located on Lake Geierswalde— an landmark tourism development project at one of many artificial lakes created through landscape rehabilitation. In the afternoon, local experts from organizations involved in post-mining redevelopment will present their work and share their experiences. Topics will include the economic reuse of former mining sites, strategies for regional development, and initiatives supporting the socio-economic transition from a lignite-based economy to a more sustainable and diversified future.



As we will spend a considerable amount of time outdoors in the forest—where it can already be cold and wet at this time of year—you are strongly advised to wear sturdy footwear and warm, weather-appropriate outdoor clothing.

DAY 5

Thursday, 6 November 2025

30-years Anniversary of the MSc-program “Tropical Forestry” at TU Dresden

On Thursday morning, you will meet with the Alumni Relations Office at the main TU Dresden campus to learn about TU Dresden alumni activities, particularly the TU Dresden Alumni Ambassador Programme. Afterwards, we will have a joint lunch at the Mensa on the main TUD campus.

In the afternoon, we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the MSc programme in Tropical Forestry at TU Dresden with a special symposium bringing together supporters, lecturers, students, alumni, and friends of the programme. The symposium will take place at the IHD in Dresden, which is located close to the TU campus (a 15-minute walk from the Mensa). Following welcome addresses by representatives of TU Dresden and the DAAD, there will be a retrospective session looking back on three decades of teaching tropical and international forestry at TU Dresden, highlighting challenges and achievements.

This will be followed by an introduction to the newly developed curriculum for the programme, which will come into effect in October 2025 with the recent start of the winter semester. A particular highlight of the symposium will be two panel discussions featuring alumni and forestry experts who will address current issues and challenges in tropical forest management, as well as international forest governance and policy. The day will conclude with a joint reception offering an opportunity for informal networking and conversation in a relaxed atmosphere, where we can all celebrate this milestone together.



DAY 6

Friday, 7 November 2025

INREM Alumni–Student Career Center

Day 5 focuses on direct exchange between tropical forestry alumni and current students at TUD the Forestry Campus in Tharandt. In the morning, the Career Centre will host a session where students can explore the diverse career paths and professional experiences of alumni working across various sectors – including non-profits, international cooperation, government, private industry, and science

Following a joint lunch at the Mensa, the alumni seminar will conclude with a final evaluation session.

In the afternoon, participants are invited to visit the Amazonia exhibition at the Panometer in Dresden. This immersive experience features the world's largest 360° panoramic depiction of a tropical rainforest, enhanced with sound and light effects that capture the atmosphere and rhythm of the jungle.



DAY 7

Saturday, 8 November 2025

Individual Departure from Dresden

Participants organise their individual departure from Dresden.

Program Schedule

Day 1 Sunday, 2 November 2025

Individual Arrival in Dresden

Accommodation: Meininger Hotel Dresden (Wiener Platz 5, 01069 Dresden)

Day 2 Monday, 3 November 2025

Seminar : Adaptive Forest Management and Post-Mining
Landscapes in the Global South

Venue : Forstcampus Tharandt, Cotta Bau, Room C2

9:15	Registration (coffee & tea)	
10:15	Opening of the seminar and welcome addresses	Prof. Dr. Lukas Giessen, Prof. Dr. Jürgen Pretzsch
10:30	Introduction into the program	Dr. Simon Benedikter
10:45	Introduction of the participants	Moderation: Dr. Marolyn Vidaurre de Mulczyk
11.30	Lunch (Mensa Tharandt)	
12.45	Alumni Keynote speeches I: Forest management and restoration in the age of climate change – (each presentation 10 min) • Deborah Lynn Sue: "Climate-resilient Forest Management in Fiji" • Dr. Le Thien Duc: "Setting up demonstration sites for sawlog production in Vietnam in promoting sustainable, climate-resilient forestry practices"	Moderation: Dr. Carsten Schusser

- Hiwot Workagegnehu Tafere: "Land certification to foster the restoration of degraded communal land in Ethiopia"
- Maria Ysabel Perdomo: "Climate-Resilient Forest Management in Paraguay"
- Leunell Chris Buela: "Integrated Flood Modelling and Forest Management Strategies for Climate Resilience in the Caga-yan de Oro River Basin, Philippines"

(Questions and discussion on main aspects:
16:10-16:40)

14:10	Introduction Excursion I: Climate change impacts on forests in Germany and climate-smart Forestry in Saxony	Dr. Eckhard Auch
14:30	Coffee/tea break & Alumni Tree Planting Ceremony at the TUD Forestry Campus Tharandt	Dr. Carsten Schusser & Dr. Eckhard Auch
15:30	Alumni Keynote speeches I: Post-mining landscape rehabilitation and transformation – (each presentation 10 min) • Meilina Wijayanti: "Collaborative Management in Restoring Post Mining Landscape in Indonesia" • Dr. Patrick Opoku: "Strategies for Landscape Rehabilitation and Socio-Economic Transformation in the Gold Mining Sectors of Ghana" • Kanchan Devi & Pankaj Agrawal: "Transforming Post-Mining Landscapes for Regional Sustainability in India" • Dr. Jianfeng Zhang: "How to rebuild Vegetation in Abandoned Land of Copper Mining Area in China" (Questions and discussion on main aspects: 16:10-16:40)	Moderation: Dr. Marolyn Vidaurre de Mulczyk
16:40	Introduction Excursion II: Post-mining landscape rehabilitation and socio-economic transformation in Lusatia, Germany"	Dr. Simon Benedikter
17:00	Coffee & Chatting	
17:15	Joint departure to Dresden	
18:30	Joint welcome dinner at „Schillergarten“ Dresden (Blasewitz)	

Day 3

Tuesday, 4 November 2025

Excursion I: Forest adaption and transformation in Saxony

7:00	Departure by bus (Meininger Hotel, Wiener Platz)	Dr. Eckhard Auch, Dr. Carsten Schusser
9:00	Visit of different forest plots and demonstration sites around the village of Gelenau by walking	Dr. Hamm & Dr. Wolf, SachsenForst
13:00	Lunchbreak "Restaurant Ratskeller" in Thum	
14:00	Presentation of the public long-term forest strategy of Saxony (2020–2050)	
15:00	Visit of different forest demonstration sites and nurseries by walking around	Dr. Hamm & Dr. Wolf, SachsenForst
17:00	Return to Dresden	

Day 4

Wednesday, 5 November 2025

Excursion II: Post-mining integrated landscape and regional transformation in Lusatia

7:30	Departure by bus (Meininger Hotel, Wiener Platz 5, Dresden)	Dr. Simon Benedikter, Dr. Marolyn Vidaurre de Mulczyk
9:00	Visiting platform "Welzow Süd" (start): visits to different mining and post-mining rehabilitation sites around Welzow	Dr. Karl Preußner
13:00	Lunch Break at the Resort „Der Leuchtturm" at the Geierswalder Lake	

14:00	Seminar with regional experts: "Post-mining landscape and Socio-economic Transformation in Lusatia" • Invil Schirling & Sebastian Sammt (Wirtschaftsregion Lausitz GmbH): Insights into post-mining economic and social transformation in Lusatia: Strategies, policies and projects " • Lucas Barthold (Lausitzer und Mitteldeutsche Bergbau Verwaltungsgesellschaft) „Managing and developing post-mining sites and landscapes in Lusatia“ • Daniel Just (Zweckverband Lausitzer Seenland Sachsen): "Tourism development in the post-mining waterscape of Lusatia"	Venue: „Der Leuchtturm“ Moderation: Dr. Simon Benedikter & Dr. Marolyn Vidaurre de Mulczyk
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17:00	Return to Dresden / Individual dinner
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Day 5

Thursday, 6 November 2025

Venue : • Fritz-Foerster-Bau, Mommsenstr. 6,
Room FOE/102/U
• IHD, Zellescher Weg 24, 01217 Dresden

10.00	Meeting with the TUD Alumni Relations Office Venue : Fritz-Foerster-Bau, Mommsenstr. 6, Room FOE/102/U	Susann Mayer, Jeremiah Peterson
12:00	Joint lunch (Mensa Dresden, main TUD campus)	
13:00	Registration: 30-Years MSc "Tropical Forestry" Symposium	Event Moderation: Jeremiah Peterson, TUD International Alumni Relations
14:00	Welcome Addresses • Prof. Dr. Niels Modler, Vice-Rector Academic Affairs and Lifelong Learning, TU Dresden • Prof. Dr. Peter Krebs, Dean of the Faculty of Environmental Sciences, TU Dresden • Dr. Renate Dieterich, Head of Development Cooperation Programmes, Germany Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)	
14:30	The MSc.-program Tropical Forestry (FOMT) in Retrospective	Prof. Dr. Jürgen Pretzsch

15:05	Tropical Forestry under renovation: The new curriculum	Prof. Dr. Lukas Giessen
15:20	Coffee/tea break	
16:00	Panel Discussion I: Forest management in the tropics – Between conservation, timber production and livelihoods • Dr. Carsten Schusser – Germany • Panchanon Kumar Dhali – Bangladesh • Minsi Bebeku – Uganda • Dr. Marcelo Rezende – Brazil • Dr. Pyi Soe Aung – Myanmar	Panel Moderation: Prof. Dr. Dietrich Darr
16:55	Musical interlude between panels	
17:00	Panel Discussion II: Trends and challenges in global forest governance and policy • Dr. Jude Kimengsi – Cameroon • Patience Tumwesigye Naamara – Uganda • Dr. Hellen Nansikombi – Uganda • Dr. Md Saifur Rahman – Bangladesh • Georg Buchholz – Germany	Panel Moderation: Prof. Dr. Dietrich Darr
18:00	Closing synthesis and the way forward	Prof. Dr. Lukas Giessen
18:15	Reception (food and drinks) – open end	

Day 6 **Friday, 7 November 2025**

Tropical Forestry Career Center: Alumni meet students
Venue: J1 (Judeichbau, Tharandt) TUD

9:00	Welcome words	Prof. Dr. Lukas Giessen
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9:15 Introduction into the program

Dr. Simon
Benedikter &
Lakshmy Jalaja
Rajan

9:20

Selected FOMT alumni carrer portrays: FOMT alumni present themselves and their career pathways

- Dr. Ananta Ram Bhandari – Nepal (WWF)
- Quoc Truong Ta – Vietnam (woody biomass, energy, private sector)
- Dr. Tran Van Hiep – Vietnam (CIFOR, value chain certification)
- Vanessa Ospina Mesa – Colombia (ministry, Vision Amazon Program)
- Dr. Hassan Elnour Adam Zakaria – Sudan (University of Kordofan)
- Pedro Daniel Pardo Villegas – Guatemala (University of San Carlos de Guatemala)

Moderation:
Lakshmy Jalaja
Rajan

10:20 Coffee/tea break

10:45

World café I: alumni meet students

11:15

World café II: alumni meet students

11:45

World café III: alumni meet students

Moderation :
Lakshmy Jalaja
Rajan, Dr. Simon
Benedikter, Dr.
Marolyn Vidaurre
de Mulczyk, Dr.
Eckhard Auch

12:15

Joint lunch in Mensa Tharandt

13:15

Seminar evaluation, handing out of certificates and closing (C2)

Dr. Simon
Benedikter, Dr.
Eckhard Auch

14:00

Visit of the Panometer Dresden “Amazonia” (those who are interested)

Dr. Simon
Benedikter, Dr.
Carsten Schusser

Day 7 Saturday, 8 November 2025

Individual departure from Dresden

Accommodation

Meininger Hotel Dresden

Wiener Platz 5

01069 Dresden

The Meininger Hotel is located close to the main train station and the long-distance bus station (Ammonstraße), where FlixBus services from Berlin Airport arrive.

Please note that you must settle the bill yourself, for which you will receive a cash mobility grant including the hotel rent on the first day of the seminar (Monday morning).

Meininger hotels usually serve breakfast between 6:30 am and 10:30 am. Lunch packs are available for early departures (e.g. on excursion days). Please contact the hotel reception for details.





Seminar Participants



Dr. Ananta Ram Bhandari

Nepal

WWF Nepal

ananta.forester@gmail.com

MSc in Tropical Forestry

TU Dresden, Germany

PhD in Environmental Science

Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Dr. Ananta Ram Bhandari is a professional from Nepal having a PhD in environmental science and MSc in Forestry. He has expertise in forestry, biodiversity and ecosystem services. Dr. Bhandari has experience of over 20 years in Nepal's integrated landscape management, biodiversity conservation, forestry and natural resource management. Currently he is leading WWF-Nepal's Forest & Landscape Program.



Dr. Carsten Schusser

Germany

**TU Dresden (Institute of
International Forestry and Forest
Products)**

Carsten.Schusser@tu-dresden.de

BSc in Forestry

Georg-August University Goettingen

MSc in Tropical International Forestry

Georg-August University Goettingen

PhD in International Forest Policy

Georg-August University Goettingen

Dr. Carsten Schusser has over 20 years of expertise in tropical and international forest management and research. His career includes roles in international development across South America, Africa, and Asia, as well as consultancy positions at GOPA and DFS.

His scientific focus is on Socio-Political Forest Management and Governance. Since April 2022, he has been a lecturer and researcher at TU Dresden, where he leads the PSFMO (Power for Sustainable Forest Management Outcomes) research group. This group conducts in-depth research on both formal and informal actors in forest management, aiming to assess their interests, power, and influence on outcomes across social, environmental, and economic dimensions to gain insights from an actor-centered perspective.

In addition, Dr. Schusser lectures on Silviculture for Tropical Forests, Plantation Forestry, Agroforestry, Project Management, and World Forestry, and supervises Master's and PhD students.



Deborah Sue

Fiji

Ridge to Reef Management

DSue@R2RManagement.com.fj

BSc

James Cook University

MSc in Tropical Forestry

TU Dresden, Germany

Deborah is an international forestry consultant via Ridge to Reef Management.

Deborah graduated from James Cook University in Australia with marine biology and zoology majors before starting her career in forestry. After her MSc studies at TUD, she spent the year 2004 with the Forest Stewardship Council in Germany before taking on the Fiji forest certification project job at the Ministry of Forestry.

She established her Ridge to Reef Management consultancy in 2008 to work in Fiji and other countries. Her clients have been the Forest Stewardship Council, Pacific Community, Live and Learn, BirdLife International, Conservation International, United Nations Forum on Forests, European Union, Fiji Ministry of Forestry, and forest management companies like Fiji Pine Limited and Fiji Hardwood Corporation Limited.

She was back in the Fiji Ministry of Forestry in 2019 for about four years as the Director of Forest Resource Assessment and Conservation and then the Executive Director for Resource and Development.

Ridge to Reef Management has been back in operation for the last two years and Deborah's expertise and interests are very wide: from forest management and certification, certification standards development, ecosystems services restoration, forest policy and governance, food forestry, urban forestry and forest therapy.



Prof. Dr. Dietrich Darr

Germany

**Weihenstephan-Triesdorf University
of Applied Sciences, Faculty of
Agriculture, Food and Nutrition**

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Dipl.-Ing. (equivalent BSc) Forestry
FH Schwarzburg

MSc in Tropical International Forestry
TU Dresden, Germany

PhD Forestry
TU Dresden, Germany

Dietrich is a socio-economist interested in the analysis of smallholder agriculture and related land use decision-making in the global South; the role of non-timber forest products in local livelihoods and value chains; and the analysis of innovation processes in the agri-food industry. This also includes market and consumer studies for agricultural and agroforestry products. He received his doctorate from TU Dresden in 2008, with a dissertation on the diffusion of agroforestry innovations in East Africa.

Before his current appointment he has been working as professor of agribusiness at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences, Germany, where he led the establishment of the Sustainable Food Systems research centre, among other responsibilities. He has also been working for a leading international management consulting firm for several years.

Among the research projects Dietrich currently leads are the EcoSiPaS project (funded by BMLEH 2022-2026) with research partners from Germany, Brazil and the USA; the SUFACHAIN project (funded by BMFTR 2022-2026) with research partners from Germany, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan; and the SusAVal project (funded by BMFTR 2023-2025), with research partners from Germany, the Czech Republic, Italy, Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia.

Dietrich is an active member of various professional organisations such as the European Forum on Agricultural Research for Development (EFARD). He serves as a member of the editorial boards of Elsevier's Forest Policy and Economics and Trees, Forests, and People journals. He has been listed among the 2024 Top 20 scholars for expertise in agroforestry (Top Scholars by Expertise | ScholarGPS).



Dr. Eckhard Friedhelm Auch

Germany

**TU Dresden (Institute of International
Forestry and Forest Products)**

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Assessor of forestry service

Federal State Baden-Württemberg, Germany

Diplom Forstwirt (MSc in Forestry)

University of Freiburg, Germany

PhD in International Forest Policy

University of Freiburg, Germany

Dr. Auch has work experience in German forest management, regional development of rural areas, CBRM and community forestry in dry forests. Also, in commercial production and business.

My current tasks are teaching Forestry organizations, timber and NTFP production systems and value chains, research planning, project management, communication, amongst others. I am Academic Advisor for the MSc Tropical Forestry and involved in developing the study program further. My research is around production system and value chain upgrading in a forestry context.

Professional interests are in the intersection between humans and forests, dealing with rural livelihoods, collaborative forest/natural resource management, organization and implementation of sustainable forest management, extension, developing of rural areas and landscapes. Special interest in sustainable, participative dryland management and restoration in East-Africa.



Georg Buchholz

Germany

**Gesellschaft für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)**

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Diplom Forstwirt

University of Freiburg

Akademischer Geoinformatiker

University of Salzburg

Mr. Georg Buchholz is the lead of the sectoral programme International Forest Policy (IWP), a GIZ project providing advice and support for the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) on all international forest policy related matters. Before his current assignment Mr. Buchholz has been working in the forestry sector in Asia for over 25 years. His assignments were in Indonesia, Malaysia, Laos and the ASEAN level, working on REDD+, Community forestry, Forest governance, peat management and biodiversity conservation supporting partner ministries in their forest policy reform and supporting capacity building processes.



Prof. Dr. Hassan Elnour Adam Zakaria

Sudan

**Faculty of Natural Resources and
Environmental Studies, University
of Kordofan Elobeid Sudan**

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BSc

University of Khartoum, Sudan

MSc. in Tropical Forestry

TU Dresden, Germany

PhD

TU Dresden, Germany

Dr. Hassan Elnour Adam, an expert in GIS and remote sensing for natural resources, has been working as an associate professor since April 2015 at the University of Kordofan, Sudan. Dr. Adam obtained his PhD and M.Sc. degrees from the Technical University of Dresden, Germany, and his B.Sc. from the University of Khartoum, Sudan. He is the former dean of the Faculty of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies, University of Kordofan. He gained more than average experience in his specialization, having worked at the University and executed many development projects concerned with natural resources monitoring and assessment in Sudan.



Dr. Hellen Nansikombi

Uganda

**Verra – Manager, Forestry, Natural
Climate Solutions**

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BSc in Forestry

Makerere University, Uganda

Postgraduate Diploma in Gender Equality Studies

University of Iceland

MSc in Tropical Forestry

TU Dresden, Germany

PhD in Forest Sciences

Technical University of Munich, Germany

Hellen Nansikombi is a forest scientist from Uganda with over ten years of experience in sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation. She holds a PhD from the Technical University of Munich, an MSc from TU Dresden, and a bachelor's degree from Makerere University. She works at Verra, a leading global organization that develops standards for credible carbon markets, where she manages the review and improvement of Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU) projects. She provides technical oversight, coordinates project reviews, and supports the development and revision of carbon accounting methods. Previously, Hellen worked at Fairventures Worldwide, developing AFOLU projects and methodologies, and conducted research on forest governance and land use change at the Thünen Institute in Germany. She is an author of scientific publications on forest governance and land use change. Hellen remains committed to advancing sustainability.



Hiwot Workagegnehu Tafere

Ethiopia

**Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit
(GIZ) GmbH**

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BSc in Forestry

Wondo Genet College of Forestry, Ethiopia

MSc in Tropical Forestry

TU Dresden, Germany

Hiwot Workagegnehu Tafere holds a Bachelor's degree in Forestry with a specialization in Tropical Forestry Management. She began her career in academia, serving as a university lecturer for eight years. Transitioning into the development sector, she has gained extensive experience in natural resource management, landscape restoration, and forest management across nongovernmental organization and private sectors. Currently, Hiwot leads a Forest Landscape Restoration project in Ethiopia, implemented through the German Development Cooperation (GIZ).



Jeremiah Peterson

USA

**Coordinator International Alumni
Relations TU Dresden**

jeremiah.peterson@tu-dresden.de

Jeremiah Peterson is the coordinator for international alumni relations at TU Dresden. Since August 2022, Jeremiah Peterson has been working as the coordinator for international alumni relations in TU Dresden's Alumni Relations Office. "Our work promotes the international visibility of TU Dresden and is therefore crucial to a university's communications," he says. "We tailor our activities to the university's needs. It is only as strong as the community of diverse personalities. The more stories we can tell from the history of our alumni and the more connections we can make with them - whether they come from Hoyerswerda or Hanoi - the stronger the presence of our university will be in their hometowns."

The international network of Alumni Ambassadors is the backbone of his work. These dedicated graduates, based all over the world, have agreed to foster TUD in their various countries. "My task is to restructure and expand this program while at the same time boosting its visibility."



Prof. Dr. Jianfeng Zhang

China

**Institute of Subtropical Forestry of
Chinese Academy of Forestry**

Zhangk126@126.com

MSc in Tropical Forestry

TU Dresden, Germany

PhD

Beijing Forestry University

The research begun since 1990 after graduating from Shandong Agricultural University (studied for B.Sc & M.Sc of Forestry from 1983 to 1990). Main activities are devoted to silviculture and degraded land ecological rehabilitation, especially saline soil amelioration and non-point source pollution control in water source areas. Meanwhile, initiates the probe on ecology of human settlement.

Based on these, three relevant books have been published in Springer Nature (<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-3-642-39915-2>; <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-10-1850-3>; <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-981-15-1373-2>).

During work studied for Ph.D. at Beijing Forestry University (1999–2003). Moreover as visiting scholar performed researches at Institute of Soil Science, Technical University of Dresden (TUD) supported by CSC during 2001–2002. Also studied for M.Sc. at International Institute for Forestry of TUD (1995–1997) sponsored by DAAD. Acted as Topic Editor for the journal *Frontiers in Plant Science* and Guest Editor of the journal *Forests*. Currently more than 170 papers have been published by internal/international journals.



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Jude Kimengsi is Senior Scientist and Leader of the Forest Institutions and International Development (FIID) Research Group at the Chair of Tropical and International Forestry, TU Dresden. He holds a PhD in Geography with a focus on the natural resource–development nexus. From 2017 to 2019, he was an Excellence Initiative Research Fellow at the Institute of International Forestry and Forest Products, Faculty of Environmental Sciences of TU Dresden. Between 2012 and 2015, he served as a Consultant on Sustainable Development and Coordinator of Research, Consultancy and Publications Division at the Pan African Institute for Development – West Africa (PAID-WA). He has been engaged in consultancy activities for several organizations such as GIZ, WWF, African Wildlife Foundation (AWF)’s EU-sponsored Programme for the Conservation of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa (ECOFAC), and the WWF/Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) on resource mobilization for conservation and livelihoods. Jude was PI of the DFG-funded CAM-FORST project (2020–2024). As PI of the DFG-sponsored AFIKA-FORST project on “Fostering the actor-institutions nexus in forest management: Theoretical construction and empirical analysis in sub-Saharan Africa”, he is currently exploring forest governance questions in parts of Central, West and Southern Africa. He is the Coordinator of the IUFRO Working Group on “African forest politics and governance”.



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After studying Forestry and National Economics with a focus on development policy, Prof. Jürgen Pretzsch early started a career in Tropical Forestry. Based on a critical doctoral dissertation on timber logging in the Ivory Coast, he has got a lecturer position under the GIZ in Paraguay. From his subsequent Post-Doc position in Freiburg, where he has built up a world forestry specialization, he shifted to TU Dresden in 1993 and was since then nearly permanently till retirement head of the Institute of International Forestry and Forest Products. Also he was responsible for the newly established MSc. Course on Tropical Forest Management. He cooperated with many tropical countries, focusing on rural development and forestry and following a constructivist and action oriented research approach. Currently he is senior professor.



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Mrs. Kanchan Devi is a distinguished officer of the Indian Forest Service (1991 batch, Madhya Pradesh cadre, India) with over three decades of experience in forestry, forest policy, education, administration, and research. Currently she is serving as the Director General of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Dehradun, she also holds the esteemed position of Chancellor of the Forest Research Institute (Deemed to be University). In this capacity, she leads India's apex body for forestry research and education, guiding policy formulation, national coordination, research organization, and capacity-building efforts.



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Graduate Forestry University of Vietnam, Faculty of Forestry, B.Sc., 1999 and M.Sc., 2003; Doctorate (PhD), 2015, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, Technische Universität, Dresden. He has worked for several international environmental organizations in Vietnam before becoming a professional consultant and Technical Director of the CleverForestry Consultancy, and for many international organizations, clients, and development banks such as FAO, USAID, IUCN, UNDP, WWF, FFI, SNV, GFA, JIA, SA, KfW, ADB, WB, Indufor, TBI, CM Biomass, Forest Trends, IFC, WWF US etc. He also works for private clients in Vietnam related to FSC FM, FSC CoC, SBP, JIA/FIT, Due Diligence, and the timber-related supply chain, and ESG for green investment. His work is to promote natural forest conservation-related policy advocacy, biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest management, FSC forest certification, legal timber trade (EUTR, EUDR), supply chain analysis, forest governance monitoring system, green development, forest-related project development and to transform the global marketplace into a force for saving the world's valuable and threatened species and forests.



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Leunell Chris M. Buela is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, University of the Philippines Los Baños. He holds a Joint MSc in Groundwater and Global Change – Impacts and Adaptation from IHE Delft Institute for Water Education, Universidade de Lisboa, and Technische Universität Dresden. His expertise includes water resources engineering, climate change adaptation, sustainable agriculture, groundwater and flood modeling, and precision agriculture. He currently leads a component of the DOST-MOST Joint Research Program on climate risk assessment for Philippine rice-based systems, in collaboration with China, to develop adaptive multi-model climate strategies that enhance food security. He is also actively involved in the HyDEPP-SATREPS project, a collaborative initiative with Japan that focuses on integrated hydrologic modeling and hybrid disaster risk assessment to strengthen flood and drought resilience in major Philippine basins. Previously, he served as the Hydrologic and Hydraulic Modeling Expert for the Climate Resilience Study of the San Roque Multipurpose Project, which assessed climate change impacts on water supply and flood risks in the Agno River Basin. Internationally, he is a member of the World Food Forum Young Scientists Group's Better Environment Team, where he actively promotes sustainable water management and supports the regional implementation of the Global Youth Action Plan in Asia and the Pacific.



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- Consultant FAO, Rome (2004)
- Phd and PostDoc researcher U Goettingen (2005–2011)
- PostDoc U Wageningen (2011–2012)
- Senior Scientist U Goettingen (2012–2017)
- Principal Scientist “Forest Governance”, European Forest Institute (EFI, 2017–2020)
- Chair in Tropical and International Forest Governance (2020–date)



Dr. Marcelo Rezende

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PhD Forest and Land Monitoring in Drylands

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Dr. Rezende has a robust background in forestry, having explored different aspects of the field throughout his academic journey, from his BSc to his PhD.

With 15 years of work experience in forestry, he has enjoyed the past 10 years working on various projects and programs in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN. Currently, he works closely with countries in the implementation of the Drylands Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program.

Marcelo is a Carlo Schmid Fellow alumnus and has been a guest lecturer in the Tropical Forestry program at TU Dresden since 2018.

When not in Rome (FAO HQ), Marcelo dedicates his time to his personal forest restoration project in Portugal, where he has the opportunity to put in practice his learnings and “walk the talk”.



Maria Ysabel Perdomo Rolon

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Maria Ysabel Perdomo Rolón is a Forestry Engineer with a Master of Science in Tropical Forestry from the Technical University of Dresden, Germany. She currently works as Forestry and Sustainability Coordinator at FLS Paraguay S.A., where she leads the implementation of environmental and social governance systems and promotes sustainable forestry practices. With experience in both the public and private sectors, she has coordinated reforestation, arborization, and forest education programs, and has contributed to environmental impact assessments and clean production strategies. At the National Forestry Institute (INFONA), she managed international cooperation efforts and served as Paraguay's focal point for the UN-REDD program. Her career includes international training and collaboration in countries such as Germany, Colombia, Mexico, and Brazil. She is also a graduate of the 17th edition of the Programa Dirigencial of DENDE (Democracia en Desarrollo), a leadership development program aimed at fostering civic engagement and social transformation. Ysabel is married to Felipe Vásquez and is the proud mother of Emilia, born in January 2024. She is fluent in Spanish, English, and Portuguese, and is recognized for her leadership, teamwork, and strong commitment to sustainability and environmental governance.



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Vidaurre is an environmental educator and researcher with over 20 years of experience in education, sustainable development, and environmental management. Her dedication to advancing environmental knowledge and practice led her to teaching and research positions at the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, Universidad Real, and the Postgraduate Centre for Ecology and Nature Conservation (UMSA). During this period, she also contributed to the design of the national Biocultura Program, later serving as its coordinator and implementing sustainable development initiatives in small rural communities.

Motivated by a deep interest in the sociocultural aspects of environmental management, Vidaurre expanded her career internationally. She was awarded the prestigious Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's International Climate Protection Fellowship and later pursued a doctoral program on Climate Change in the Andes at TU Dresden. Currently, she serves as Coordinator of International Postgraduate Programs at the Faculty of Environmental Science, TU Dresden, where she continues to promote interdisciplinary approaches to environmental education, sustainability, and climate research.



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Currently, I work at the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) as a policy analyst in the field of environmental policy. I completed my postdoctoral studies at the European Forest Institute and TU Dresden, Germany, holding an AvH Fellowship from 2020 to 2021. I completed my PhD in Forest Policy at the University of Göttingen, Germany, holding a DAAD Fellowship from 2013 to 2017. I completed my second master's degree in Public Policy at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) in Tokyo, Japan from 2009 to 2010. I participated as a Visiting Scholar at GRIPS during 2018. I completed my Bachelor's and Master's in Forestry at Khulna University, Bangladesh, from 1997 to 2004. As a career civil servant of the Government of Bangladesh, I have approximately 12 years of experience in the field of public policy and development, with a focus on forest biodiversity, environmental issues, climate change, and food security. I have published more than 25 articles in renowned peer-reviewed journals, serving as a reviewer and member of the Editorial Board, including Climate Action (Nature) and Forest Policy and Economics (Elsevier).

My field of interest includes:

- forest and climate development policy and governance,
- analysis of development agendas and development politics,
- bureaucratic politics, power and interests of development actors,
- public administration and development, and so on.



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A forestry graduate with more than 15 years working experiences in the field of environment, forestry, and natural resources management. My interests shape my career journey, which have provided me with opportunities and challenges in dealing with sustainable development issues related to biodiversity conservation, climate change, and environmental & social impact assessments. I manage various projects related to environmental management, environmental due diligence, collaboration in conservation areas, environmental sensitivity index mapping, reforestation & land rehabilitation program, environmental & social impact assessment for energy and mining industries, including awareness campaign and community development programs. Currently I serve as Environmental Compliance & Studies Coordinator at an Energy Sector Company.



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Currently working as a forestry contractor for a British company, The New Forest Company and Danish company, Equatoria Forestry Company, involved in plantation establishments, management, planning and harvesting. Forest restoration of indigenous species.

Under the stewardship of a contracting company, I have overseen the establishment of over 100,000 ha of Pine and Eucalyptus plantations across Uganda. Also restoration of degraded forests and their management. Over 17 years of managing forests under FSC certification.



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"Ombeni Hingi" is a Senior Conservator with over 16 years of experience in conservation. He specializes in the social forestry and has worked on significant establishment and management of community (village) forest reserves (VFRs), wildlife management areas (WMAs) (forms of co-management models). In addition, Mr. Hingi has actively been engaging in the management of human-wildlife conflicts. However, since the past four years, he works as a liaising officer and assistant to the Chief Park Warden of Burigi-Chato National Park at Tanzania National Parks Authority thereby implementing community outreach activities and assisting Park administrative roles. He holds a Master's degree in Tropical Forestry from Dresden University of Technology (TU Dresden), Germany and a BSc. Wildlife Management from Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania. He is passionate about promoting best practices between conservation, people and development.



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I am a seasoned forestry and biodiversity expert with over two decades of experience in protected area management, community-based natural resource management, and sustainable development. Currently serving as the Forestry and Biodiversity Advisor for the GIZ Biodiversity Cluster in Bangladesh, I have led numerous initiatives for the conservation of the forests, mangroves and marine ecosystems in Bangladesh. Throughout my career, I have held key advisory and leadership roles in projects funded by BMZ, EU, and ADB, focusing on biodiversity conservation, natural resource management, climate adaptation, and co-management. My experience spans across government agencies, NGOs, and international consultancy, demonstrating strong coordination, policy advisory, and capacity-building expertise. I have contributed to the design and implementation of SMART patrolling, ecological monitoring frameworks, and citizen science platforms. As a skilled communicator and collaborator, I have participated in multiple international conferences and training events on environmental governance and sustainable natural resource management.



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I am a professional forester of Indian Forest Service of the 1991 Batch of Madhya Pradesh Cadre; worked in the State of Madhya Pradesh for the Scientific Management of teak forest of various divisions; prepared about 100 Rehabilitation and Reclamation plans for the Iron ore mines in the districts of Bellari, Tumkur and Chittradura of Karnataka, India; coordinated Cumulative Impact Assessment Study along the basin of various rivers; Retired as Head (Finance & Budget) Madhya Pradesh Forest Department, India on 31st March, 2024.



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Currently working as Country Director, Uganda in charge of Development & Partnerships. Worked in different capacities in both public and private placements but notably; at National Environment Management Authority, GIZ RUWASS (2012) in Uganda as a Communications Intern, internship at the UNU FLOReS(2013)and Parliament of Uganda as a Coordinator for Parliamentary Network on the World Bank & IMF until 2018.

While my interest at Tharandt was in Urban Forestry, I have been practicing Agroforestry and Restoration since I returned to Uganda. My current job opened for me opportunities to work closely with local communities as well as policy makers. This has not only exposed me to life altering experiences but also evidence that nature based solutions are the best way to address the effects of climate change. That any solution that does not include community livelihoods may not achieve sustainable outcomes. Since my assignment with FVW, I have seen both landscapes and livelihoods changed for the better and I am glad that I chose forestry as my career. I am grateful to TUD for the holistic forestry programme that equipped me with the all rounder knowledge that has proved very instrumental in carrying out my work.



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Dr. Patrick Opoku is a Lecturer in the Department of Forest Resources Technology at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi Ghana. He earned his BSc at KNUST, a diploma from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark and his PhD from the Dresden University of Technology, Germany. His research interests and teaching portfolio spans a wide area of forest sciences including forest business planning and appraisal, urban forestry, forest governance, climate change, and socio-economic policy of tropical forestry. With over 15 years of experience in natural resource management, he previously worked under Tropenbos International, GIZ, and the Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development (IOER) in Germany. Dr. Opoku played a key advisory role in the establishment of the Network of Excellence on Land Governance in Africa (NELGA). He also helped the Africa Land Policy Centre, GIZ and DAAD build capacity and scholarship programmes across African universities. He is the recipient of multiple prestigious awards and honors including the Alexander von Humboldt Climate Protection Fellowship, the Dresden Leibniz Graduate Scholarship Award, and the DAAD Climate Africa Postdoctoral Fellowship.



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Bachelor's degree in Biology from the University of San Carlos de Guatemala (USAC) and a Master's degree in Tropical Forestry from the Technical University of Dresden, Germany.

Also earned a diploma in Ecological Economics and completed coursework for a Master's in Rural Development.

Completed advanced studies in Environmental Management in both Germany and the United States.

Research experience includes floristic diversity, agroforestry systems, and socio-environmental dynamics.

Has teaching experience and currently serves as a faculty member at the School of Biology, USAC.



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Dr. Pyi Soe Aung is a conservation professional from Myanmar with over 17 years of experience in forestry, biodiversity conservation, and environmental governance. He holds both an M.Sc. and a Ph.D. in Tropical Forestry from Technische Universität Dresden, Germany. His research and publications focus on social-ecological systems, with a specialization in co-management of protected areas, community-forestry, forest-related livelihoods and traditional ecological knowledge. He currently serves as the Conservation Director of WWF-Myanmar, leading the strategic development and implementation of WWF's conservation programmes across the country. Prior to this, he held leadership positions at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation in Myanmar where he made significant contributions to policy development, protected area planning and management, and international cooperation programmes on biodiversity conservation. During his government service, he served as Myanmar's national focal point for several multilateral environmental platforms, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Global Tiger Forum (GTF), and the ASEAN Working Groups related to Biodiversity. He has successfully managed multi-million-dollar conservation and sustainable development projects funded by international donors such as BMZ, FCDO, SDC, Danida, and UNOPS. As part of the WWF's Asia Pacific team, Dr. Aung is a recognized voice in policy dialogue and regional collaboration for nature conservation in the Greater Mekong Region.



Dr. Simon Benedikter

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PhD in Development Studies

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Dr. Benedikter has an interdisciplinary background and almost 20 years of experience working at the intersection of environmental, social and development issues. From 2007 to 2013, he was a senior researcher at the Center for Development Research (ZEF) at the University of Bonn. During this time, he was based in the Mekong Delta (Vietnam) as a research and project coordinator, working on integrated water resources management (IWRM) and water governance in the Mekong Delta. From 2014 to 2017, he served as a GIZ-affiliated environmental policy adviser at the Vietnamese Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources in Hanoi. Since 2018, he has been a staff member at the Institute of International Forestry and Forest Products, where he has coordinated and conducted empirical research on forest landscape restoration and climate protection in the Greater Mekong Subregion. He also coordinates international higher education cooperation projects at the institute with partners in Argentina, Thailand, Cameroon and Bangladesh, and the INREM international alumni expert network.



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Mr. Truong has a strong academic background in Forestry Science combined with more than ten years of work experience in forestry research, forest inventory, forest management certification, and community development projects. Currently, Mr. Truong is working as a Sustainability manager for a wood pellet trading company. He is responsible for supply chain management and suppliers' compliance oversight in Southeast Asian countries. He is also supporting forest owners and forestry companies to develop their sustainable forest management plans; consulting biomass/wood pellets producers and wood processing companies to achieve various forest certification schemes such as SBP, FSC, PEFC, GGL, or JIA.



Dr. Tran Van Hiep

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PhD

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Tran Van Hiep has been a lecturer and researcher since 2005 at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Hanoi University of Mining and Geology. His teaching focuses on subjects such as marketing, financial analysis for small enterprises, and value chain development.

Tran Van Hiep leads market and value chain research for CIFOR-ICRAF projects in Vietnam. His work focuses on agricultural value chain analysis, market development, and livelihood improvement. He serves as an organic auditor for CERES GmbH and has delivered guest lectures on value chain analysis at TU Dresden, Germany.

He holds a Doctorate in Forest Sciences (Dr.rer.silv.) from Technische Universität Dresden, Germany in 2021, where his studies were supported by a prestigious Vietnamese Government Scholarship. He also earned a Master of Business Administration from Vietnam National University, Hanoi, in 2011.



Vanessa Ospina Mesa

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**Fondo Patrimonio Natural
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BSc in Ecology

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PhD

TU Dresden, Germany

Ecologist from Javeriana University, Colombia. Master's degree in Tropical Forest Management from TU, Dresden. More than 10 years of experience working with rural communities, grassroots and indigenous organizations in the Colombian and Ecuadorian Amazon. Specifically, I have experience working on territorial governance, natural resource management, sustainable livelihoods frameworks and community conservation strategies within a participatory and gender-based approach. I had a background working with the local, national, and international entities such as: Thünen Institute, GIZ, The Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM), SINCHI, Tropenbos Colombia, Fundacion Proterra, among others. Nowadays I'm working in the Vision Amazonia program, that is a cooperation program to reduce deforestation in the amazon region, together with the Minister of environment of Colombia, in cooperation with the KFW, The minister of Norway and England.

List of Participants

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Dr. Carsten Schusser	Germany	TU Dresden
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Panchanon Kumar Dhali	Bangladesh	GIZ
Pankaj Agrawal	India	Indian Forest Service (previously)
Patience Naamara Tumwesigye	Uganda	Fairventures Worldwide FVW gGmbH (FVW)
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Notes



Notes



JOIN THE ALUMNI NETWORK!



The professional alumni network "Integrated Natural Resources and Environmental Management (INREM)" was founded in 2022 as a global network of experts. Located at the Faculty of Environmental Sciences of Technische Universität Dresden (TU Dresden), INREM unites international educational programs with developmental relevance in environmental sectors: CIPSEM, M.Sc. Ecosystem Services, M.Sc. Hydrosience, M.Sc. Tropical Forestry and UNU-Flores. As an interdisciplinary North-South-South expert network, INREM brings together alumni in a transnational initiative. It aims to facilitate regular exchange of experiences, joint, social learning, and international networking among its members.

Interdisciplinary and integrative thinking and acting constitute the leitmotif of INREM. Both are essential for sustainable development in the sense of the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

