

ETHIOPIA–SUDAN–FINLAND HIGHER EDUCATION EXCHANGE IN FOREST SCIENCES (ESUFIFOR)

Coordinator: University of Helsinki, Finland

Partners: University of Khartoum, Sudan; Wondo Genet College of Forestry, Ethiopia

Study areas: Agricultural Sciences



Khartoum, Sudan. Photo by Syed Ashraful Alam.

What are the main aims of your network?

Our aim is to provide students of the University of Helsinki Department of Forest Ecology and partner institutions with up-to-date information and methodologies as well as new, more holistic approaches in forestry. This will equip them with adequate tools to respond to the increasing challenge for sustainable management of forests and related natural resources under anticipated climate change.

Our aim is to promote South–South cooperation by exposing Ethiopian and Sudanese exchange teachers and students arriving in Finland to new information, new research and teaching methods applicable in Africa and other tropical regions. We aim to widen the existing collaboration with other Sudanese and Ethiopian universities and other training institutions. The research and education in forestry at the University of Helsinki provide the exchange teachers and students the opportunity to learn to utilise the full potential of forests and forestry for the



benefit of their countries.

What kind of activities are there in your network?

University of Helsinki has provided research inputs to Sudanese institutions and training to Sudanese researchers since 1983. University of Helsinki and Sudanese forestry administration have also implemented joint workshops and practical forestry projects in Sudan. Wondo Genet College of Forestry and University of Helsinki have collaborated since 1990, particularly in research and postgraduate training.

With the North–South–South project we intend to carry out 4 incoming and 8 outgoing student and teacher exchanges each. We also aim to organize an intensive course on forest landscape restoration in Ethiopia (2008) and another on carbon sequestration in Sudan (2009).

What sort of successes and challenges have you encountered during your project?

Previous collaboration between University of Helsinki and University of Khartoum has resulted in training of high-ranking forestry professionals for academic education, research and national forestry administration in Sudan. A total of 6 doctoral degrees have been completed by Sudanese researchers. In the North–South programme since 2004 a total of 11 students (8 from Sudan, 3 from Finland) and 11 teachers (6 from Sudan, 5 from Finland) have carried out exchange visits of 3–4 months (students) or 2–12 weeks (teachers).

The student exchanges have succeeded well. All exchange students from Finland have completed an MSc or BSc thesis based on the data collected during the exchange. The Sudanese students have on average completed 18 ECTS at University of Helsinki during their exchange.

The pilot intensive course on forest tree ecophysiology organised by compiling 4 teacher visits from University of Helsinki to University of Khartoum in 2007 was a success. It introduced up-to-date methodologies on tree ecophysiological measurements for 35 Sudanese students from 11 universities.

