PART I

THE FOREST SECTOR
Activities can be analysed and studied at various levels of aggregation. One approach is national; everything is lumped together and the behaviour of a country as a whole is observed. An alternative approach is to examine the way that individuals behave and individual enterprises perform. Economists traditionally work at both these levels. They distinguish macroeconomics from microeconomics and have developed different theoretical concepts to suit each approach. However, there is also a third, rather neglected, level that lies in between. It might be called mesoeconomics. This deals with the behaviour of particular industries or sectors of economic activity. In Part I of this book the sector approach is developed by applying it to the group of varied activities that is based on forest resources. This portion of the national economy is conveniently called the forest sector.

The forest sector is a broad-based concept. Its scope embraces scientific, technical, economic, social and cultural features, which interact with each other in many possible ways. The complex behaviour of the sector is determined partly by its scientific and technical characteristics — rates of tree growth, ecosystem responses, population dynamics and the like — and partly by the actions of people and organisations involved in sectoral activities, including the owners, workers and managers of forests and forest industries. The way that the sector responds to change and the direction that its future development will follow, are influenced by human values, preferences and aims. These interact with the ecological and physical realities of the sector.

In this book the behaviour of the forest sector is viewed from a human standpoint; the perspective is anthropocentric. This stance is appropriate when the resources, activities and outputs, which make up the sector, are being studied from the point of view of a strategist who is responsible for its management and future development, as is the case here.

Part I contains six chapters, each of which looks at the sector in a different way:

Chapter 2 outlines the forest sector concept, defines it, and provides a general description of its composition; the dynamic interactions which are a feature of its behaviour, the role of people in sectoral activities and the need to adopt a holistic approach.

Chapter 3 examines the sector as a collection of resources, and examines their distribution, allocation and renewal.