



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

The role of FAO in land tenure reform to support REDD+ implementation

Land and forest tenure systems greatly influence a country's ability to reduce deforestation and forest degradation.

Clear tenure rights can provide an incentive for sustainable management and conservation of forests, since those with secure tenure rights have a strong interest in maintaining the resource. Identifying and recognizing legitimate tenure rights, including customary tenure rights, also strengthens accountability and is essential for success in Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+). For many countries, addressing tenure issues is an essential part of achieving their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to fighting climate change. FAO is committed to supporting countries as they identify and then implement appropriate strategies to address tenure issues so they can meet obligations established under the 2015 Paris Agreement, UN's Sustainable Development Goals and other international treaties.

What are systems of tenure?

Tenure systems determine who can use what resources, for how long, and under what conditions. These systems can be based on written policies and laws as well as unwritten customs and practices. An individual or a group can also hold multiple rights and these can be bundled together. For example, there can be numerous rights related to the same parcel of land, such as the right to sell the land, the right to use the land through a lease, or the right to travel across the land.



Building connections and cross-sector synergies

FAO has developed a global programme to support the application of Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT). These voluntary guidelines, developed and adopted by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) under the auspices of FAO, provide a valuable framework with principles to guide countries in improving tenure governance of land and forests and in establishing tenure conditions that enable sustainable management of forests and REDD+.

FAO supports implementation of these guidelines by raising awareness, developing capacity and partnerships, and initiating projects. Synergies have developed among national tenure initiatives using the VGGT and REDD+ programmes. Applying FAO expertise has helped to identify and support cross-sectoral strategies that involve agriculture, land and forestry sectors to tackle deforestation and forest degradation. National workshops to raise awareness of the VGGT help bring multiple actors together.

FAO supports Benin and Tunisia as they bring together relevant ministries and other stakeholders to discuss tenure issues affecting forests.

Legal and policy frameworks conducive to good tenure governance

Technical assistance from FAO helps countries assess their legal and policy frameworks in order to identify measures to improve tenure governance, with a particular focus on reducing deforestation and degradation. The agency also helps formulate legal provisions related to tenure, organize multi-stakeholder consultations, and guide improved tenure registration procedures.

In Benin, the FAO legal team provided input on the tenure aspects of the country's draft forest law while in Pakistan, it organized consultations on proposed changes to regulations affecting tenure rights in reserve forests.

Facilitating progress on the ground

At the national policy level, FAO support complements focused technical assistance that affects tenure issues on the ground with expertise ranging from formal recording and registration of tenure rights, and using tools such as Solutions for Open Land Administration (SOLA) and the mapping tool Open Tenure. Governments and other stakeholders are supported in rolling out new technical solutions to increase efficiency, consistency and accessibility of spatial data.

In Uganda, FAO supports integration of forest and land tenure spatial data to improve capacity to make land-use decisions.

Building capacity on tenure and REDD+

Strengthening capacity, South-South cooperation and technical assistance are at the core of FAO activities. In tenure matters and in REDD+, FAO promotes and supports exchanges, produces training materials and technical guides as well as e-learning courses, and moderates information sharing platforms such as the D-Group on Legal Preparedness for REDD+.