



TENURE SECURITY FOR BETTER FORESTRY

Understanding forest tenure in South and Southeast Asia





Why consider forest tenure?

Forest tenure

Ownership or long-term rights that define:

WHO can use WHAT forest resource, for HOW LONG and under WHAT conditions

Without tenure security, there cannot be sustainable forest management and the contribution of forestry to poverty alleviation or sustainable livelihoods will be limited.

Tenure provides a base on which to build capacities that can lead to sustainable forest management and, in turn, poverty alleviation.

FORESTS cover 30 percent of global land area and contain most of the world's terrestrial biodiversity and more carbon than is in the atmosphere. They contribute to the overall global energy supply and provide food, fodder, medicines, building materials and paper products as well as cultural, spiritual and recreational havens. They also are vital for climate mitigation and soil and water protection. At the same time, one in every four people on earth, some 1.6 billion people, rely on forest resources for their livelihoods. Yet their ability to continue to support their livelihoods through traditional dependence on the forest is under threat.

Despite some slowing, deforestation continues at alarming rates. Increasing population and related pressure to expand agricultural cultivation, growing demand for wood products and related increases in illegal logging, industrial development and unsustainable commercial trade of non-wood forest products are all part of the scenario.

This scenario, within a globalizing economy, has put pressure on countries to re-evaluate traditional tenure systems and triggered debate on the effectiveness of public-sector forest management.

Since the mid-1980s, many countries have witnessed rapid changes in

resource tenure patterns and increasingly complex stakeholder relations as governments have become more committed to empower local communities, decentralize decision-making and increase private-sector involvement in forest management. Securing tenure rights for forest land is about power – power that comes from owning the resource or having rights to manage it and to use the revenues from it.

Forest tenure is not the same as farm tenure

Most farmers have full control over their farmlands and the products they cultivate, while people who own or manage forest land generally have much weaker tenure rights – even though returns on investment are far more long term in forestry than agriculture. One explanation is that forests and timber have traditionally been considered resources of national importance, and thus tenure issues have reached far beyond the forest sector.



FAO's study on forest tenure in South and Southeast Asia

This brief is based on the results of an intensive study carried out by FAO, in collaboration with the Asia Forest Partnership, to elicit data and indicators that would give more quantifiable evidence of the impact of various tenure regimes in South and Southeast Asia. The study, *Understanding forest tenure in South and Southeast Asia* (Forestry Policy and Institutions Working Paper No. 14, 2006), examined the effects of different tenure systems on land and resource use and forest degradation and loss, as well as the potential for sustainable forest management to serve as a tool in poverty alleviation.

The study analysed forest tenure according to two variables: type of ownership and level of control or access to resources. It also looked at the combination of ownership – legal or customary – and arrangements for the management and use of resources.

The full study is available online at:
www.fao.org/forestry/site/33871/en



Assessing change

According to the 2005 Forest Resource Assessment (FRA), each year some 13 million hectares of forest area are converted to other uses, mainly to agriculture. While this loss is somewhat offset by 5.7 million hectares of new forest growth, the earth is still losing some 200 km² of forests each day. From 2000 to 2005, South and Southeast Asia had a 286 000 ha annual increase in forest plantation but still a 2.8 million hectares net loss of forest. Between 1990 and 2000, private ownership increased 0.8 percent globally, but in South and Southeast Asia, the increase was 2.7 percent.





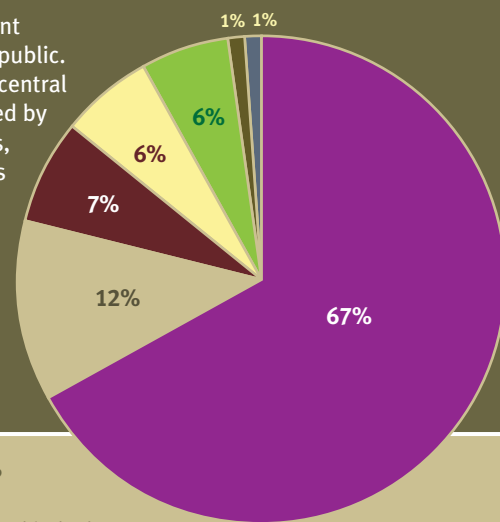
Who owns Asia's forests?

MORE than a third of the world's population lives in South and Southeast Asia. High population density and rapid economic growth put pressure on the agriculture and forest sectors of most countries in the subregion. However, geographic and demographic variation among the countries makes it difficult to make cross-cutting pronouncements on how forest tenure security supports sustainable forest management and, in turn, poverty alleviation – especially as more than 90 percent of the forests in the subregion remain State owned.

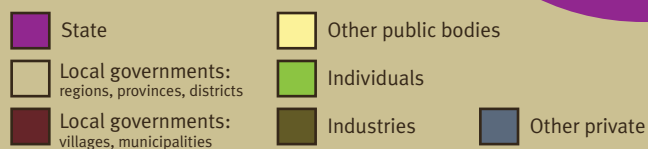
The fundamental role of forests and sustainable forest management in national development, poverty alleviation and food security is widely recognized in the subregion. Yet forest stakeholders and governments continue to debate the questions of who owns the forest and who has access rights to forest resources.

Forest ownership in South and Southeast Asia

In South and Southeast Asia, some 92 percent of the forests, about 365 million hectares is public. Of this, 67 percent is under direct control of central governments, another 12 percent is controlled by regional, provincial and district governments, 7 percent by local villages and municipalities and 6 percent by other public bodies. Of the remaining 8 percent, 6 percent is privately owned by individuals, 1 percent by industries, and 1 percent by other private entities. An insignificant percentage (less than 1 percent each) is owned by local communities and indigenous people.



Forest ownership structure





Choosing appropriate tenure arrangements to support sustainable forest management and poverty alleviation

IN recent decades tenure arrangements have evolved as stakeholders have learned what schemes work and don't work within various contexts. Tenure arrangements that can support sustainable forest management, and in turn improve livelihoods and alleviate poverty, range from hands-on State management to State allocation of certified land titles for local governments, communities or individual smallholders.

It is crucial that tenure arrangements meet the unique needs of each situation and provide appropriate incentives for sustainable forest management.

Community forestry

In granting long-term forest management rights to communities, the most positive results occur when the management plan builds on an existing traditional structure; sets out clear provisions about rights, responsibilities and decision-making; and local people have training opportunities and open avenues of collaboration with local forestry departments. However, as with joint forest management, community forestry often depends on funding and support from the State.

Community management has an advantage over other tenure systems for poverty alleviation, especially for

addressing the needs of the poorest and promoting equity and empowerment. In order to succeed, community forestry requires clearly defined, long-term rights as well as capacity building opportunities for local people. Community forestry works well because it builds on traditional structures rather than replacing them and it focuses on managing the forest resources that have value to local people.

In Orissa, **INDIA**, joint forest management has been successful in regenerating degraded forests, marking a first step towards collaboration between local communities and forestry departments. However, the programme's success depends on funding and the State maintains a high level of control. In order to be sustainable, joint forest management will need to evolve to more shared decision-making and independence from external funding.

Similarly, **THE PHILIPPINES** has transferred natural resource management to marginalized groups in response to demands for social justice and poverty alleviation. However, these people are dealing with limited capacities and need additional support to learn how to meet their obligations.

In **NEPAL**, some 20 percent of forest resources covering 1.1 million hectares are community managed. Local people who form Community Forestry Users Groups (CFUGs) prepare operational plans with technical assistance from forest rangers, NGOs or the district forest officers. The plans delineate protection, management and utilization rules of the forest, fix prices for selling or disposing of forest products and set out punishment for violators. As a result of many years of capacity building as well as the fact that the arrangement

was built upon traditional structures, forest conditions have improved in community-managed areas with CFUG members in agreement that managing community forests is a worthwhile endeavour. Those community forest projects that have included pilot livelihood improvement components have had very positive results. However, there have been problems with delays in handing over new community forest areas or renewing existing ones because the government requires a forest inventory which local people are not qualified to handle themselves and they cannot afford to pay outside technicians.



Management support by local governments

Decentralization and devolution of management, control and monitoring responsibilities requires support in the form of resource allocation that will allow the local government to stabilize tenure rights, settle claims and occupancy questions, resolve conflicts, mobilize grant resources, establish flexible mechanisms for allocating resources and provide capacity building.

The trend towards decentralization would seem to indicate that there would be increased responsibility on the part of district or local forestry offices to support local people in managing their forests. When the forestry staff has proper training and resources to take advantage of the organizational capacity of a government office, the potential for success is high. The problem is that local offices are often understaffed or underfunded.

In **THE PHILIPPINES**, decentralization and the devolution of management responsibilities, control and monitoring to local government has given early signs of success in setting up and stabilizing tenure rights claims and occupations in forest lands under co-management agreements. The presence of the local government staff also helps to resolve claim and boundary conflicts and mobilize grant resources for forest development activities.

Private smallholders

Allocating forest land to individual smallholders has potential to be a successful management arrangement, despite the fact that the forest land individual smallholders receive is usually not of a very high quality in terms of its resources. By granting the smallholders land use certificates or other forms of legal titling, their confidence in tenure security is manifest through their renewed interest in forest protection and tree planting.

In **VIET NAM** some 23 percent of forest land is directly managed by individuals. Farmers receive Red Book Certificates which provide long-term or indefinite access and use rights. They have the right to exchange, lease, inherit or mortgage their certificates and to participate in joint production and commercial activities. Although they often receive lands that are of poor quality, they still have proved to be more effective managers than private companies. Having clear ideas of their rights and entitlements to receive benefits for their efforts has encouraged their conservation efforts.

There also has been a significant tenure shift in Yunnan, **CHINA**, where 20 percent of forest land is managed by individuals. While it is true that this shift is significant, many of the new managers, especially smallholders, are facing problems because tenure security is not explicitly guaranteed as part of the management scheme.

Leasehold forests

Leasing forests to a community or individual family for a specified purpose gives a strong sense of ownership to leaseholders which manifests itself in positive ways. For example, **NEPAL** has established leasehold forests, especially targeting poor households near degraded forests, with all benefits going to the individual families. Leasehold group activities begin with protection measures such as warding off grazing animals and forest fires, expand to improvement measures such as community-determined weeding, thinning and pruning activities, and then add planting of forage species and multi-purpose and fodder tree species on the lease land.

This ability of families to diversify income sources and benefit from their efforts in forest management has led to reductions in food deficiency as well as restoration of the forest area they manage. This approach requires high financial and human inputs at the beginning and the eventual federation of the leasehold groups into multi-purpose cooperatives for long-term sustainability. The federation process is a long one and at present only a small area has been involved in the arrangement, so it will be important to analyse the results in terms of both financial and human labour costs.





Common property

The potential for common property arrangements in forests managed by collectives is promising. In **VIET NAM**, common property ownership works through owners groups with the communities distributing benefits to members in accordance with existing village regulations that specify rights and regulations. The fact that there is legal recognition of this form of management agreement with the owners receiving legal land use certificates is an important incentive for the local people to keep unauthorized loggers out of their areas.

Commons: Land or other natural resources used simultaneously or serially by the members of a community

Common property: A commons from which a community can exclude non-members and over which it controls use

Tenure arrangements that blend modern with traditional

Traditional informal tenure systems that regulate forest use are present throughout South and Southeast Asia. Even the best intentions of introducing new tenure arrangements into an area can run into problems if they do not recognize the existence of these informal, customary tenure systems and attempt to blend the modern with the traditional.

Sabah, **MALAYSIA** has attempted to achieve this by making long-term Occupation Permits available to formalize customary tenure in forest reserves. However, Malaysia's Occupation Permits were actually established for logging operators, and their cost (US\$68 per hectare) is beyond the reach of local communities and families that rely on subsistence agriculture and forest resources. In addition, the Occupation Permits only cover land in active use even though the fallow land is part of the local agricultural rotation system. At this point, the permits provide communities with a degree of tenure security but they are insufficient to address the inequities faced by indigenous communities with legitimate land claims. In fact, indigenous communities do not think they should have to pay for a permit to remain on what they consider their ancestral lands.

Disregarding traditional systems when establishing new regulations can lead to severe and seemingly irresolvable conflicts. For example, in **PAKISTAN**, customary law practiced by forest communities throughout the nation is frequently in conflict with formal forest regulations. In the absence of State control, collaborative management with customary law can help balance the lack of secure tenure by fostering a sense of community ownership which engenders a commitment to

conservation. For instance, in **INDONESIA**, local people who rely on the forests follow traditional laws (*adat*) that provide highly developed guidelines for sustainable forest management but are not recognized by the government. In Orissa, **INDIA**, participants in a "self-initiated" community forestry management system – some 2 509 groups and villages covering 186 000 ha of forest land – have taken it upon themselves to set up forest protection groups. In spite of their success in controlling forest degradation and deforestation, they operate with no legal recognition.

Management by the State

State management is still the most prominent form of tenure in the majority of the countries assessed. In many cases the State faces problems related to scarcity of financial and human resources or insufficient institutional capacity, yet State-managed forests have the advantage of a long tradition and possibly stronger regulations. This is especially important for national parks and protected forests. In cases where these advantages are complemented by the availability of resources, the potential for successful and sustainable forest management increases, as for example in Meghalaya, **INDIA**, and **VIET NAM**, where State-owned forests are the best funded and managed.

Facing the challenges

WHEN efforts to increase involvement of local communities, smallholders or the private sector in forest management do not bring the desired results, often the reaction is to blame the new management system rather than to look at the conditions under which it is operating. Communities involved in forest management often face a number of constraints related to tenure security that, if not dealt with in the early stages, can negate the potential for success with long-term implications.

Fragility of granted rights

When the State grants rights, often it does not go far enough in terms of providing clear, long-term tenure with supporting legislation. As a result, tenure holders live with fear that the government might change its policy and, for example, institute a logging ban or quota system, which would not allow them to derive economic benefits from forest resources.

Informal or short-term rights without sufficient promise for future reward will not compel the recipients to devote the time and energy needed to manage the forest sustainably. Problems also emerge when the government grants rights to one local community without considering the traditional use another local group has made of the same area, leading to disputes and conflicts between the central government and local groups or among the groups themselves.

On the other hand, in those instances where policy and legislation have been put in place in order to regulate the introduction of tenure where none had existed before, there

has been success in improving the condition of the forest. **VIET NAM** has a new tenure system that is close to private forest but is actually a long-term lease. The fact that it is long term gives a sense of ownership and responsibility to individual owners and forest users that they did not have before and, thus, increases the chance that they will manage the forest sustainably.

In Yunnan, **CHINA** deforestation and illegal cutting have increased despite government implementation of forest reform meant to allocate collective-owned land to individual households. The reform, called the “two hills system”, recognizes household, collective and contract management arrangements. However, the system, based on a “whoever plants trees owns them” policy, has not encouraged people to plant trees. The reforms do not distinguish between forest land and forests, making ownership ambiguous. As a result, conflicts arise over benefit sharing, particularly in household-managed forests, and farmers, feeling they have no rights to decide how to use, manage or dispose of their land or any potential production, will harvest their resources out of fear that if they wait, the State will claim them.

State control in disguise

Although countries throughout the region have dabbled in enabling local communities and individuals to manage the local forests and reap their benefits, the overall structure has not changed very much. At best, devolution has been limited and, in most cases, the State has retained responsibilities, rights and ownership over the forests. In those cases where devolution has been tried, it often has been introduced without providing the institutional support or capacity building needed to make it successful.

Under the guise of devolving responsibility through “joint forest management” which is a partnership between the government and community, or through private ownership arrangements made with individuals or companies chosen by the government, the State often still maintains a high level of control over the management. This is especially true with harvesting and marketing which is where the major profits are.



THAILAND, in an effort to control deforestation, set up a total ban on logging in natural forests and increased support for converting degraded forest reserves to plantations. However, the plantation monocultures did not replace the many benefits local people had received from natural forests. The government maintains control over community forests despite the fact that some have been well managed by villagers for more than 15 years. This has led to resentment and an impasse between commercial reforestation and local forest users, and deforestation has continued.

In **PAKISTAN**, although private forests exist that are either individually or communally owned, the management plans give the Forest Department the last word on harvesting, marketing and daily use of timber and fuelwood. This means local farmers have no decision-making powers over their forests and, as a result, they take no interest in the forests' management and the resources continue to degrade.

Complex land policy

Harmonizing traditional and modern land policy is crucial. Legislative and regulatory frameworks in forestry and land management are often obsolete and need to be modernized. However, in an effort to be modern, legislators tend to put together an array of complex procedures and regulations that are much too complicated for local people to handle without support. If the policies do not seem to recognize the specific needs of community foresters or individual forest managers, they can lead to an atmosphere of distrust.

In **THE PHILIPPINES**, communities with communal tenure agreements usually protect their areas from fire, poaching and slash-and-burn practices. However, there have been three successive nationwide suspensions of their harvesting rights and as a result, most communities have lost the motivation to protect and manage their forests.

In **MALAYSIA**, the Sabah Forestry Department acknowledges traditional claims of forest communities, and issues Occupation Permits that recognize their rights over land and resources. Although communities participate in the decision-making, the duration and area are determined by the Forestry Department and the cost of the permits can be prohibitive. In addition, the procedures for acquiring title through the legal system are complex, lack transparency and are not always

acceptable to indigenous people who, after all, consider the land theirs already. Thus, even though titling is available, it is not widely used.

Marginal resources

When governments set up co-management or devolve responsibility for forest management, they often hand over degraded land or forests with little or no commercial value. Seen quite often in **VIET NAM**, **CHINA**, **MALAYSIA** and **NEPAL**, this means that no matter how hard the new managers work to improve the forest, it will take a long time to have real rewards for their efforts, if ever. If their efforts fail, the fault will lie with the lack of rehabilitation support but, chances are, the tenure arrangement will receive the blame.

In **NEPAL**, a leasehold forestry programme, initiated to improve livelihoods of poor people living close to degraded forests and at the same time to facilitate eco-restoration, has been successful in building a strong sense of ownership which is crucial to management. Despite the poor conditions, new owners and title holders have managed to derive benefits and improve forest management. However, because its success has relied on donor subsidies for the needed inputs and management capacity building, the programme's sustainability is questionable.





Supporting better forest tenure systems

TENURE arrangements that provide tangible benefits to local users are the fundamental precondition of sustainable forest management. Any serious attempt at reform of the forestry sector must start by developing the mechanisms and supportive legislation that will ensure tenure security. However, there are other issues that must be taken into consideration when developing regulations and policy that will enable local communities or individuals to acquire and manage forest land.

Even the most sincere efforts can be derailed if efforts are not made to build the capacity of the local people to follow the letter of the law. Of course, the State will always have the right to claim land or change policy, but having a legal tenure framework will ensure that forest users understand their rights and responsibilities and have the knowledge and skills to exercise them. They will need support, for instance, in learning how to develop and follow management plans, make forest inventories or even in learning how to register the title itself.

It is also important to provide institutional capacity to local government units who have responsibility for local forestry activities, ensuring they have the expertise and funding to provide the necessary support to the people who need it. Lack of this support can certainly lead to failure, as has happened in Yunnan, [CHINA](#) and [THAILAND](#).

Capacity building

Providing tenure security to farmers or forest users requires a lot more than handing over a piece of paper that grants a title or defines use rights. Even if they are given long-term rights on paper, they may not have the knowledge or skills necessary to exercise the rights or even the comprehension to understand what the rights mean. Local communities that are given the right to establish a community forest need guidance for setting up agreements as to how they will share responsibilities and benefits of common land, and for how to go through the process of filling out and registering complex legal documents. In addition to supporting local communities and smallholders, local administrations and, to some extent, central governments often need support to increase their own capacities to plan, monitor, enforce and respect new regulations.

Institutional support

To be effective, tenure reform must be accompanied by support to local communities or small holders in forest management from relevant institutions, and local authorities have a key role in this. Even though there is a trend towards decentralization, in many countries there is very little financial or institutional capacity to implement it. The bottom line is that, at local level, there is little support for forestry. Adequate institutional support will require capacity building

of district forest officers and local forest administrations. Using simplified language to ensure distribution and dissemination of policies, laws and regulations is also important. Better harmonization of different sector policies and supporting legislation related to tenure and clear division of responsibilities and authority of different ministries at local, regional and national level will also contribute to providing the institutional support required.





Diversification

Tenure systems for managing forests can be public, private, indigenous-owned, managed solely by a community or in partnership with the State. In terms of sustainable forest management, analysis has not established the value of one over the other because success depends on a number of things beyond tenure, including country-specific conditions or the nature of the forest. Even where there are successful examples, such as in [VIET NAM](#), it is hard to prove a direct relationship between improved management and individual ownership because so many other factors may have contributed to the better management. Thus, it is crucial to look at the broader context in which the tenure agreement will operate, and decide on a case-by-case basis which type of arrangement has the most possibility for success in a given area and situation. Successful tenure systems are those that recognize and make use of the existing and potential capacities of stakeholders to manage forest resources.

Wider policy support

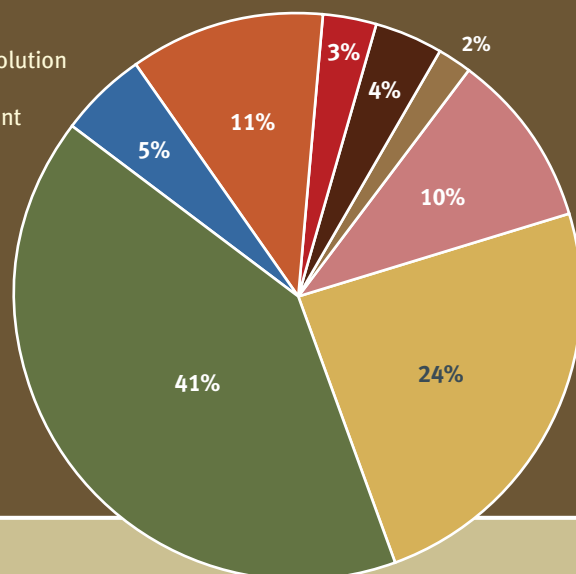
The forestry sector does not operate alone. It must work together with other sectors, especially agriculture, environment, tourism, trade as well as sectors dealing with national and global economic issues. Any effort to support sustainable forest management, whether through State, community or individual agreements, must look at the situation within this larger context and establish a framework that considers the socio-economic as well as environmental sustainability of forest management. The following lists the types of incentives that could be included in the framework.

- Improve access to markets and marketing systems – to offset remoteness from processing centres and inefficient transportation that result from the poor road infrastructure in most forested areas, such as those areas that have community forestry activities in Sabah, [MALAYSIA](#) and [THE PHILIPPINES](#).
- Provide economic incentives through appropriate tax system reforms – to encourage investment in the sector, particularly for smallholders, as with the system that has established the freehold hills in Yunnan, [CHINA](#).



- Create incentives for private sector development – to attract investment, especially during initial phases when financial inputs are required, as with the plantations established in [THE PHILIPPINES](#) and the Forest Management Units set up in Sabah, [MALAYSIA](#).
- Simplify administrative and forest management planning procedures – to ensure that local people understand and have capacity to develop and implement required management plans and, if necessary, identify funds that can be used to help with the process. For example, in [NEPAL](#) there is a large backlog of operational plans needing preparation and revision because of the mandatory requirement of a forest inventory and the increased workload of technical staff. The same is true in [THE PHILIPPINES](#) where only 30 percent of community-based forest management activities have approved plans because the people lack the funds and capacity for developing them.
- Create and implement an appropriate planning and monitoring system – to ensure better allocation of human and financial resources and to avoid unfair competition from illegal and unsustainable use of forest resources.



Most tenure agreements in South and Southeast Asia offer limited devolution of user rights and management responsibilities. Almost a quarter of all forests are strictly limited to the State's use and another 41 percent grant user rights to customary users along with permits to hunt or gather fuelwood or non-wood forest products. Local communities manage 12 percent of the public forests through joint agreements with the State, or through community or individual leases. Another 13 percent of forests have been granted to private companies mainly through logging concessions. 18 percent of the forest area is owned or managed by local users – including local forest holders, communities, user groups and individuals. Note: the remaining 10 percent actually consists of an enormous (30 million hectares) production forest in Indonesia currently undefined. It is likely to be assigned to timber concessionaires which would increase the amount of forest granted to private companies to 23 percent.



Forest management categories in public forests

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Strictly limited: no extraction rights for others |  Individual or household leases |
|  User rights/customary rights/permits to hunt and gather dead wood and non-wood forest products |  Community forest leases/forest management concessions |
|  Joint forest management with communities/community timber concessions or licences |  Private company leases/forest management concessions |
|  Private company volume permits/logging concessions/schemes |  Other |

Although reform is a powerful tool in the democratic distribution of resources, the process is not successful if poor people do not receive support from the government or local administration on how to register and manage their forest resources.





Principles for establishing a secure and enabling tenure system

THE relationships between governments, local forest managers and the forest resources in South and Southeast Asia are as varied as the region's topography. Tenure security stands as the one cross-cutting prerequisite for establishing a suitable arrangement that can support sustainable forest management and can be leveraged into poverty alleviation. Sustainable forest management can only be achieved if the people who rely on the forests for their livelihoods have the opportunities and expertise required for taking on management responsibilities.

However, first they must know they have secure rights to the forest and its resources, and, thus, the incentive and ability to profit from their work without government interference – or with the kind of supportive intervention that is based on mutually determined local needs. This means that, to be successful, tenure arrangements must consider local customs, the availability of funding, the capacity levels of the local stakeholders and the prevailing political structure.

Stakeholders can include local people, the private sector or local communities that have an interest in the forest through ownership, concession or lease. Choices of forest tenure systems can include traditional State forest management, community forestry, management by private smallholders or mixtures of these.

One fact comes through clearly in any assessment of the forest tenure situation in Asia: lack of long-term tenure security for those who depend on the forests and would be in a position to manage them sustainably is one of the causes of poor performance in the forestry sector. Of course, tenure security alone will not guarantee sustainable forest management – it needs to be complemented by other measures. However, forest users who do not have secure rights to use and manage the forests have little incentive to invest the necessary time and energy in managing and protecting their forest resources while those who have long-term legal rights have more incentive because they know the results of their efforts will serve them and their families.

The following priority areas need to be addressed as part of any attempt at forest tenure reform.

- **Diversify tenure systems.** Tenure diversification ensures the capture of each stakeholder's comparative advantage in terms of existing capacity, thus maximizing the interest in, and sustainable management of, forest resources.
- **Provide clear and secure forest tenure.** Clear and long-term tenure guarantees benefits from investments and minimizes conflict situations, thus serving as a strong incentive for sustainable forest management.
- **Provide valuable resources.** Offering tenure of quality forest land will increase interest and incentive for protecting the resource.

- **Support disadvantaged groups.** Forest tenure reforms should include specific pro-poor policies and include tenure systems specifically designed for less advantaged groups in order to provide the basis for poverty alleviation.

- **Acknowledge customary management systems.** Tenure arrangements must recognize the difference between modern and customary tenure systems. Insecurity comes from the fact that communities often manage resources as common property while modern systems focus on individual ownership. Disregarding customary management systems, including those of nomadic and indigenous people, will always lead to conflict, lack of interest in long-term management and illegal activities.

- **Enhance capacity to exercise and retain rights and responsibilities.** Providing tenure rights is not enough. It is critical to provide capacity building support to ensure that people and communities build the skills they need to exercise their rights and to meet the requirements for retaining them.

- **Step-by-step implementation.** Forest tenure reforms are complex and necessitate significant institutional and capacity-building efforts. A stepwise approach helps the governments and stakeholders to build these capacities gradually while also building confidence – both of which are necessary for successful implementation of tenure reforms.



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