



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

The role of local communities, smallholders, and indigenous peoples in REDD+ implementation



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Local communities, smallholders, and indigenous peoples at the front lines in the fight against climate change

Local communities, smallholders and indigenous peoples play an essential role in the sustainable management of land and forests and, as such, in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

They are the guardians of approximately one third of the world's forests and have customary rights over a large proportion of forest lands to be managed, conserved and/or restored.

If local communities, smallholders and indigenous peoples are effectively engaged, and their territorial rights legally recognized, they can enhance their positive action on the ground to protect forests and landscapes, address climate change, and improve their livelihoods.

The unique role that local communities, smallholders and indigenous peoples play in addressing and responding to climate change is acknowledged in the international climate arena, including in the Paris Agreement, in REDD+ processes and safeguards, and in financing mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also recognize the important role of indigenous peoples and local communities in achieving the SDGs.

In their Nationally Determined Contributions, a number of countries pledged to support community rights to manage forests and lands as a key enabling condition for action on climate change.



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FAO's support

FAO enhances the contribution of local communities, smallholders and indigenous peoples through the REDD+ process: from consultative processes on national REDD+ strategies, to participation in REDD+ implementation on the ground, and monitoring of the results of specific REDD+ actions. Main areas of support are:

Community-based forest monitoring: FAO empowers local and indigenous communities to monitor and measure their forests, so as to generate useful data and information for the management of their resources, including carbon stocks. Community-based forest monitoring strengthens local ownership and facilitates more informed local decision-making and sustainable management, thus contributing to the reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Community-based monitoring also boosts community leadership and participation, and facilitates dialogue with government.

Dialogue and active participation: FAO facilitates dialogue with communities, smallholders and indigenous peoples in consultative and decision-making processes at national and international levels, promoting due consideration of their knowledge, views, needs and concerns, particularly in relation to issues related to climate change and REDD+. At the international level, the Indigenous Peoples' Caucus, established by FAO with representatives of each of the seven indigenous socio-cultural regions, offers a unique opportunity to strengthen dialogue and collaboration. In this framework, FAO technical support focus around:

Community and indigenous rights to forests: People tend to take better care of forests that they own or manage on a long-term basis than of forests that they have limited rights to use and manage. As such, FAO facilitates the recognition of community and indigenous rights to forests, as well as related tenure reforms. (See also the flyer on Forest and Land Tenure for REDD+.)

Community-based forestry: FAO supports various forms of community-based forestry (CBF), including collaborative, community and smallholder forestry, as a key strategy to manage forests sustainably while also improving the livelihoods of local people. CBF empowers communities by giving them decision-making authority and a direct stake in forest resources management. CBF thus reduces the pressure on forests and contributes to REDD+ implementation.

Forest enterprise development: FAO provides support to local communities, smallholders and indigenous peoples' institutions in the development of forest enterprises. By strengthening associations of small producers and providing them with technical training to increase business and resource management skills, these enterprises are able to flourish, thereby achieving multiple benefits for forests, food security and the climate.

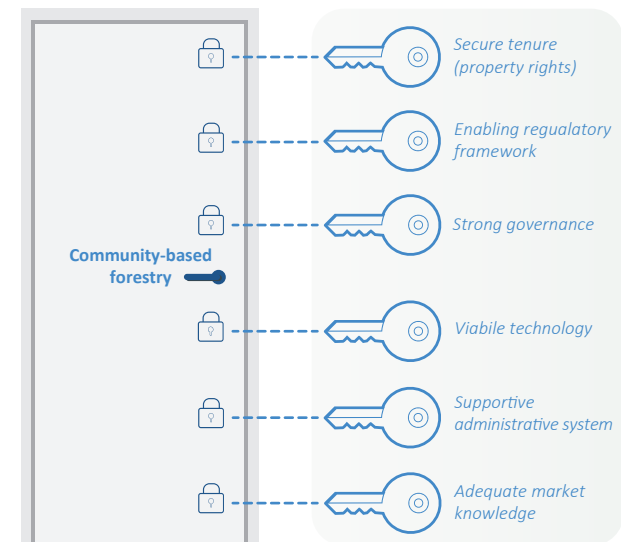
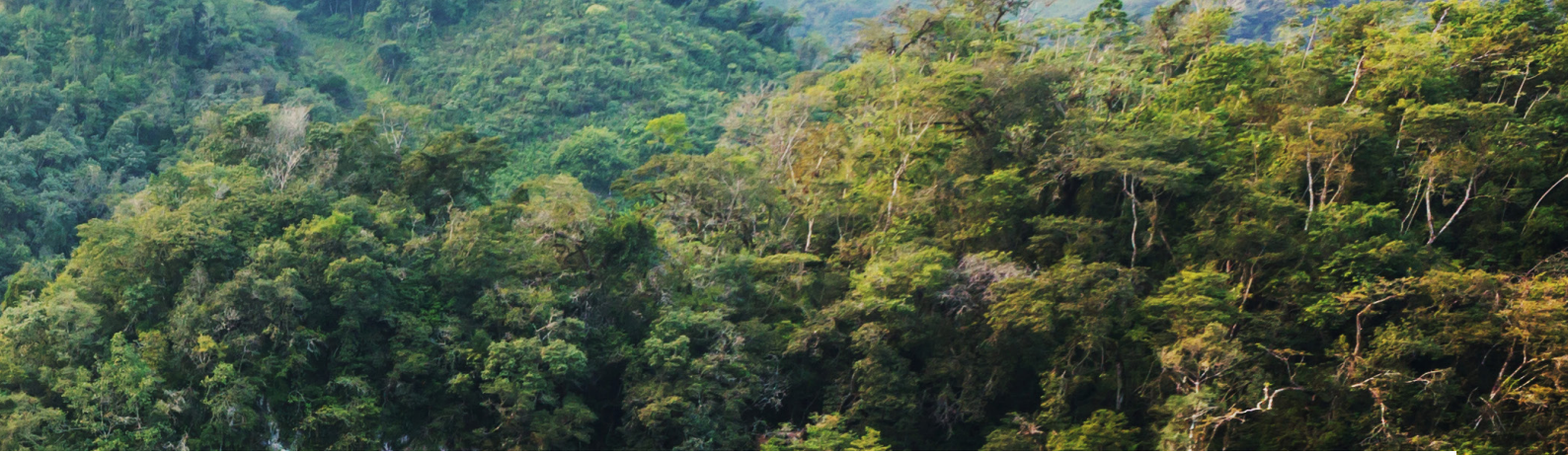


Figure 1. Community-based REDD+ must build on the lessons learned and experiences of community-based forest and land management, which have identified the following pre-conditions for success (FAO, 2016)

In accordance with International Labour Organization Convention 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), when REDD+ implementation involves indigenous peoples, their rights or territories, a robust process that respects the right of local communities and indigenous peoples to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) must be implemented.

FAO's support to countries on REDD+ is aligned with FAO's Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (2010) and FPIC Guidelines. FAO is committed to respect and promote indigenous peoples' rights in all of its activities, including the right to self-determination in development and to FPIC, as well as the respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures, territories and traditional practices.



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Examples from the ground

Local communities and smallholders manage over 20 percent of the total carbon stored above ground in the world's tropical forests.

Protecting the livelihood systems of indigenous peoples who specialize in traditional occupations within their own territories will ensure that their culture is preserved, and contribute to efforts to reduce food insecurity and improve the protection of the environment (SOFO, 2016)

Panama and Latin America:

In Panama, FAO has strengthened the capacity of indigenous technicians and traditional authorities to monitor and manage their territories by developing a community-based forest monitoring system in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and the National Coordinating Entity of Indigenous People in Panama.

Technical developments included geographical information systems, remote sensing, drone management, forest inventories, and database generation.

With FAO support, the Mesoamerican Alliance of People and Forests in consultation with its members has developed an agenda that calls for the recognition of indigenous land, territories and resources and emphasizes the need for consent on all decisions made in relation to indigenous forests and ancestral lands.

Nepal:

In Nepal, FAO has supported community-based agroforestry cooperatives to develop business plans as part of REDD+ implementation at local level.

By involving representatives of indigenous peoples' and community-based organizations in the development of Sub-national REDD+ Action Plans, FAO helps to ensure that identified actions are locally appropriate, socially beneficial and meaningful to reach national REDD+ strategy goals. The initiative has been scaled up across the country and is also being replicated in neighbouring Himalayan countries.

Key resources

FAO. 2010. FAO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples:
www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1857e/i1857e00.pdf

FAO. 2016. Forty years of community-based forestry:
www.fao.org/3/a-i5415e.pdf

FAO. 2016. Free, Prior and Informed Consent:
An indigenous peoples' right and a good practice for local
communities:
www.fao.org/3/a-i6190e.pdf

FAO. 2016. Statement from participants of the World
Forest Week event on "Unfinished agendas for forests and
climate change: Local communities and smallholders as
the enabling actors to address climate change":
www.fao.org/partnerships/forest-farm-facility/92008/en/

FAO. 2017. Smallholder forest producer organizations in a
changing climate:
www.fao.org/3/a-i7404e.pdf

GCF. 2018. Indigenous Peoples Policy:
www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/574763/GCF_policy_-_Indigenous_Peoples_Policy.pdf

ILO. 1989. Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention
(No. 169): ILO Convention C169

UN. 2007. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of
Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP):
www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html and www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

For more information, please visit the following webpages:

FAO REDD+
www.fao.org/redd

FAO Indigenous Peoples
www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/en/

Forest and Farm Facility
www.fao.org/partnerships/forest-farm-facility/en/

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