



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Land and forest tenure reform to support REDD+ implementation



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Land and forest tenure as a key element enabling REDD+ success

Land and forest tenure systems greatly influence a country's ability to reduce deforestation and forest degradation. Clear and legitimate tenure rights over forests can provide an incentive to manage forests sustainably and simultaneously reduce deforestation and forest degradation. In fact, communities and stakeholders with secure tenure rights have a strong interest in investing time and resources to maintain and enhance the natural capital under a long-term vision.

Identifying and recognizing legitimate tenure rights, including customary and collective ones, also strengthens accountability, and it is essential for the success of REDD+.

For most countries, addressing tenure issues will be essential for achieving their Nationally Determined Contributions to fight climate change. FAO is committed to supporting countries as they identify and then implement appropriate strategies to address tenure issues so that they can meet obligations established under the 2015 Paris Agreement, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and other international agreements.

Understanding tenure

Tenure refers to a variety of arrangements that determine who can access and use what resources, for how long, and under what conditions. Tenure systems can be based on written policies and laws as well as unwritten customs and practices.



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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. Understanding and clarifying tenure rights is also a first step to enhance and enforce land-use planning and natural resources management.



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FAO's support

FAO frames its overall support on tenure based on the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT), which were developed and endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security under the auspices of FAO.

The VGGT provide a valuable framework and principles to guide countries in improving tenure governance of land and forests.

The Guidelines can pave the way for successful sustainable management of forests and the achievement of REDD+ results.

Supporting implementation of the VGGT: FAO supports implementation of the VGGT by raising awareness and developing technical capacities and partnerships. National workshops and initiatives on the VGGT help bring diverse actors together, and explore synergies between agriculture, forestry and land sectors. This is key towards tackling tenure issues and producing effective REDD+ results



Legal and policy frameworks: FAO provides technical assistance to assess and develop legal and policy frameworks conducive to good tenure governance, with a focus on reducing deforestation and degradation.

Strengthening governance of land and forests: FAO provides technical assistance to governments (at national, regional and local levels) and other stakeholders (non-governmental organizations, civil society, and community organizations) in the review of institutional arrangements that support forest tenure and governance.

Securing tenure rights for men and women: FAO guides the process of tenure rights recording and recognition 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.

Capacity development and information-sharing on tenure: 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 REDD+ and Forest Governance.



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Examples from the ground

Panama

In line with the VGGT, FAO supported the participation of Wounaan communities of Aruza in the sustainable management of their territories, fostering community-based forest governance.

Community-based monitoring efforts led to the delineation of territorial boundaries, the development of land-management plans, and wood-product legality verification encompassing free, prior and informed consent.

The achievements included the approval by the local council of regulations establishing the use and management of forest resources, granting ownership rights to indigenous peoples over the natural resources on their lands.

Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, FAO is collaborating with the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Food Security and other government and non-government stakeholders to arrive at a common vision for forestry and for community-based forestry (CBF) as a way to improve governance and management of forests.

This entails the review of the country context on forest tenure with respect to the VGGT and of the existing CBF tenure regimes, as well as the development of a national strategy to strengthen CBF and a piloting of community forestry in four sites.

FAO is also supporting the drafting of the new Forestry Bill to ensure that VGGT and CBF principles are embedded in the Bill.

Tunisia

In Tunisia, FAO supported the Directorate General of Forestry to undertake participatory mapping and demarcation of the state forest domain. The case was made for local land claimants to refrain from further encroachment on the forest in exchange for recognition of existing tenure claims.

Key resources

FAO web portal on governance of tenure resources:

www.fao.org/tenure/resources/en/

FAO e-learning on tenure:

www.fao.org/tenure/resources/collections/e-learning/en/

FAO portal on SOLA and Open tenure tools:

www.fao.org/tenure/activities/administration/record-ing-of-rights/software/en/

FAO. 2011. Reforming forest tenure:

Issues, principles and process:

www.fao.org/docrep/014/i2185e/i2185e00.pdf

FAO. 2012. The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT) of land fisheries and forests in the context of national food security:

www.fao.org/docrep/016/i2801e/i2801e.pdf

FAO. 2013. Governing land for women and men:

www.fao.org/tenure/resources/results/card/en/c/fb9d7451-011b-5d95-9b38-791748a13ad7

FAO. 2016. Governing tenure rights to commons:

www.fao.org/tenure/resources/results/card/en/c/39d3d18f-3ebc-4aa5-bc2a-7c5996788a81

FAO. 2016. Improving governance of forest tenure:

A practical guide:

www.fao.org/tenure/resources/results/card/en/c/39d3d18f-3ebc-4aa5-bc2a-7c5996788a81

UN-REDD Programme. 2012. Tenure of indigenous peoples territories and REDD+ as a forestry management incentive: The case of Mesoamerican countries:

www.fao.org/3/a-i2875e.pdf (Eng) and <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i2875s.pdf> (Sp)

UN-REDD Programme. 2014. Tenure and REDD+:

Developing enabling tenure conditions for REDD+:

www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_doc-man&task=doc_download&gid=13295&Itemid=53

For more information, please visit the following webpages:

FAO REDD+

www.fao.org/redd

FAO Forestry Tenure

www.fao.org/forestry/tenure/en/

FAO tenure security

<http://fao.org/tenure/en/>

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