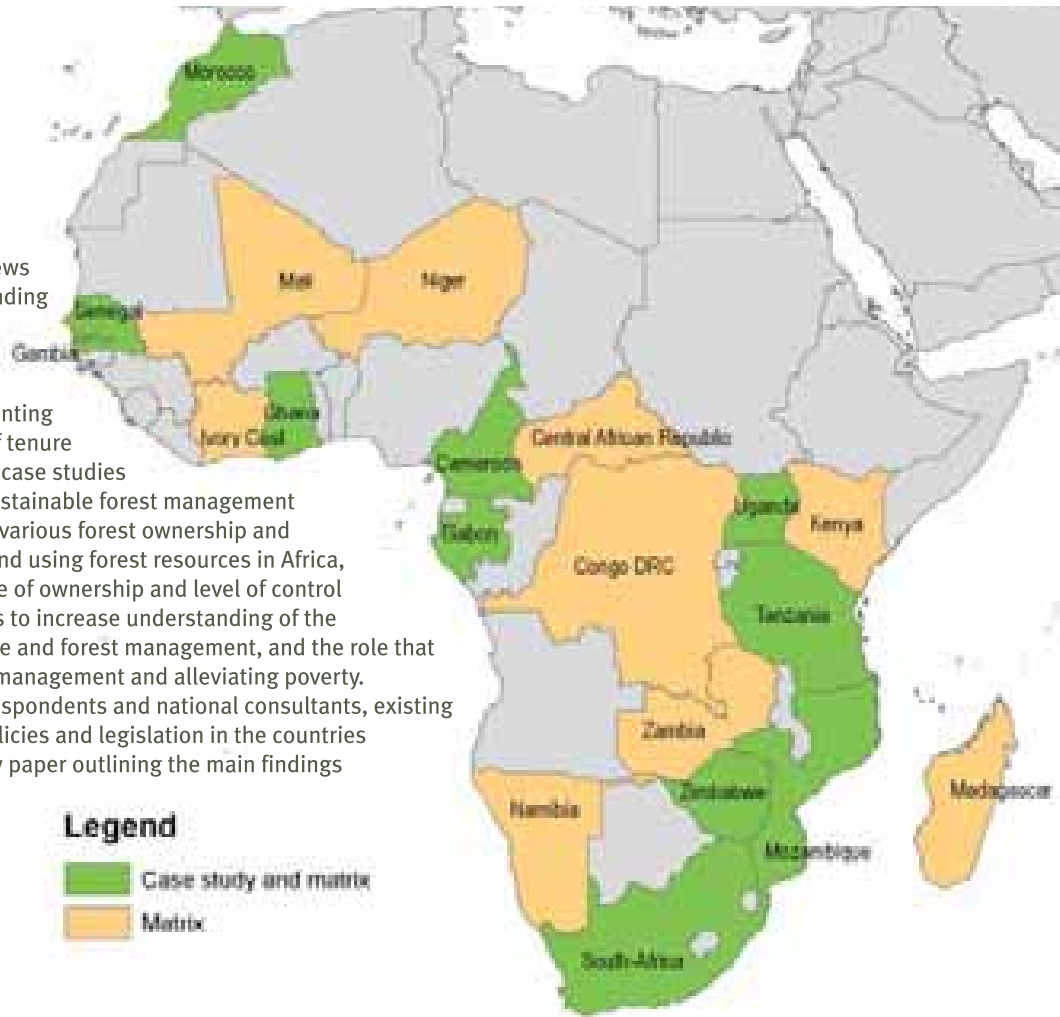


FAO's study on forest tenure in Africa

This policy brief is based on a series of reviews commissioned by FAO to increase understanding about the role of forest tenure in African countries and to provide information for the Global Forest Resources Assessment. Quantitative data from 17 countries, representing different ecoregions and a wide spectrum of tenure systems, were complemented by 11 country case studies analysing the impacts of forest tenure on sustainable forest management and poverty alleviation. The study explored various forest ownership and management arrangements for protecting and using forest resources in Africa, and analysed forest tenure according to type of ownership and level of control over and access to resources. Its objective is to increase understanding of the relationships between forest resource tenure and forest management, and the role that tenure has in promoting sustainable forest management and alleviating poverty. Information was gathered from official correspondents and national consultants, existing documents and a review of management policies and legislation in the countries concerned. The case studies and a summary paper outlining the main findings can be found at www.fao.org/forestry/site/33848/en.



Forest ownership and management in Africa?

Of the 330 million ha of forests in the 17 African countries assessed, nearly all – 95 percent – are publicly owned, mainly by central governments (83 percent). This is partly because governments since colonial times have tended to view forests as resources of national importance. There are wide variations among countries, however; for example, 30 percent of forests in SOUTH AFRICA and 37 percent in ZIMBABWE are privately owned, although the ownership structures in both countries are undergoing major shifts. Community-owned forests (mostly in the United Republic of TANZANIA) account for only 1 percent of the total forest area, but represent an interesting and innovative

tenure system. The forest areas owned by individuals or communities tend to be small. Central governments have exclusive control over 16 percent of Africa's public forest. For another 61 percent, they grant very limited user rights (such as to collect non-wood forest products for personal consumption), and retain the overall management responsibility. These areas are often left unmanaged and uncontrolled, because governments lack resources and capacity. Community management, either exclusive (2 percent) or in joint management agreements with governments (3 percent), is limited, and represents significant shares of the totals in only the GAMBIA, GHANA,

MOZAMBIQUE, SOUTH AFRICA and ZIMBABWE. Forest concessions allowing private companies to exploit forest resources make up about 17 percent of the total. Most are short-term, but longer-term concessions of 25 or 50 years are granted in CAMEROON and MOZAMBIQUE, and account for 4 percent of the total. Local forest owners and users have some form of control over about 10 percent of Africa's forests, mostly as individual ownership or local community management through joint management, leases, timber licences and management concessions.



Forest management categories

in public forests

- Strictly limited: no extraction rights for others
- User rights/customary rights/permits to hunt and gather dead wood and NWFPs
- Joint forest management with communities. Community timber concessions/licences
- Private company volume permits/logging concession schemes
- Community forest leases/forest management concessions
- Private company leases/forest management concessions
- Other

