

Strengthening Forest Tenure Systems and Governance

*How do you properly analyze forest tenure systems?
What are the methods to establish and govern forest tenure?
How do you establish and prioritize reform strategies?*

Course objectives

Forest management worldwide has undergone substantial changes over the past decades, including a gradual move away from state control towards participatory and local forest management. Ownership, use and access to forest resources, initially state-dominated, are becoming more diversified, allowing a wider range of actors to participate in forest management. This shift characterizes ongoing forest tenure reform processes.

Tenure reform involves changes to regulatory frameworks and governance, which require key stakeholders to adopt new and different roles in forest management, roles for which they frequently have little training or experience. At the same time, communities, smallholders and individuals are often unaware of their rights and responsibilities, and how these can be exercised effectively for tangible benefits.

The goal of this training of facilitators course is to enable a broad spectrum of participants to support and facilitate strengthening the reform process and governance of forest tenure systems.

Who should join

In order to create the most synergistic environment, the training will include participants from many different sectors. These include:

- national and local governments
- non-governmental organizations
- civil society
- academia

Participants should have substantial experience with tenure and tenure reform processes in addition to proficiency in written and spoken English. To maximize the learning process, the course will accommodate no more than 25 participants.

What you'll learn

The course starts by laying a foundation through the introduction of key concepts of tenure and tools for the analysis of forest tenure. The course includes practical exercises with tools to assess the reform process and identifies opportunities to apply these tools in the field. Based on discussions following the testing of the tools, and on lessons from international reviews of tenure reform, the course will identify challenges and principles for forest tenure and forest tenure reform.

Registration information

Course Partners: RECOFTC and FAO
Course dates: 8-16 September 2014
Course location: Bangkok, Thailand

What is forest tenure?

Forest tenure is established through a combination of legal and customarily defined forest ownership and rights to manage and use forest resources. It determines who can use what resources, for how long and under what conditions.

The training continues by focusing on a key principle of good forest tenure reform: the collaboration between stakeholders or actors. In this section, the participants will practice the use of tools with local forest users and officials. In all building blocks, participants will discover priorities for strengthening the forest tenure reform process. Other priorities relate to the need for strengthening the institutional arrangements, the interactions and the principles governing the reform process.

Forest tenure governance is at the heart of the forest tenure reform: both as a process and as an outcome. Assessing the present state of forest tenure governance, and exploring styles of tenure governance will allow identifying options and strategies to strengthen forest tenure governance institutions.

How the course works

Experienced trainers from RECOFTC and FAO will facilitate the course activities. The training follows a unique approach by applying experiential learning approach based on adult learning principles. Participants explore information and knowledge based on their own experience through various participatory training activities. Through analysis and reflection, a deeper understanding of social forestry is acquired and participants are able to identify opportunities for improved policy and practices.

The trainers will use a combination of training methods and exercises tailored to the training topics and tools:

- Introduction to the sessions, including input sessions to bring every participant up to the same starting point
- Exercises, including interactive plenary sessions, such as sessions with 'buzz groups' (small teams of 2 or 3 participants discussing and preparing the answers to trainers' questions) or break out or working groups (usually teams of 4 to 5 participants)
- Field work to test the use of core tools for participatory tenure assessment
- Daily review and sharing of review results, and daily feedback.

Key lessons

- The analysis of tenure systems is considered as the basis for planning tenure reform activities,
- Setting priorities and designing strategies for the strengthening of the reform process,
- Tenure governance arrangements and practices through the use of internationally accepted good practices and arrangements for responsible tenure governance as benchmarks, and
- Setting an agenda for strengthening forest tenure systems and governance.

For more information on logistical arrangements, please contact:

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FAO and RECOFTC developed a forest tenure reform training manual to provide practical guidance for countries that would like to reflect on the effectiveness of existing tenure systems with a view to making positive improvements. The course is developed based on the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) which were endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security in May 2012.

About FAO

An intergovernmental organization, FAO has 194 Member Nations, two associate members and one member organization, the European Union. Its employees come from various cultural backgrounds and are experts in the multiple fields of activity FAO engages in. FAO's staff capacity allows it to support improved governance inter alia, generate, develop and adapt existing tools and guidelines and provide targeted governance support as a resource to country and regional level FAO offices. Headquartered in Rome, Italy, FAO is present in over 130 countries.

To meet the demands posed by major global trends in agricultural development and challenges faced by member nations, FAO has identified key priorities on which it is best placed to intervene. A comprehensive review of the Organization's comparative advantages was undertaken which enabled strategic objectives to be set, representing the main areas of work on which FAO will concentrate its efforts in striving to achieve its vision and global goals.

FAO creates and shares critical information about food, agriculture and natural resources in the form of global public goods. But this is not a one-way flow. We play a connector role, through identifying and working with different partners with established expertise, and facilitating a dialogue between those who have the knowledge and those who need it. By turning knowledge into action, FAO links the field to national, regional and global initiatives in a mutually reinforcing cycle. By joining forces, we facilitate partnerships for food and nutrition security, agriculture and rural development between governments, development partners, civil society and the private sector.

About RECOFTC

RECOFTC holds a unique and important place in the world of forestry. It is the only international not-for profit organization that specializes in capacity development for community forestry and devolved forest management. RECOFTC engages in strategic networks and effective partnerships with government, nongovernmental organizations, civil society, the private sectors, local people, and research and educational institutes throughout the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. With over 25 years of international experience – involving research and analysis, demonstration sites, and training products – RECOFTC delivers innovative solutions for people and forests. RECOFTC's capacity development work promotes strong rights, fair and equitable benefits, and better governance, including strengthening gender equity and rights-based approaches.