



# GET FOREST SMART



## HOW STRENGTHENING FOREST TENURE IMPROVES RURAL DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

### FACT

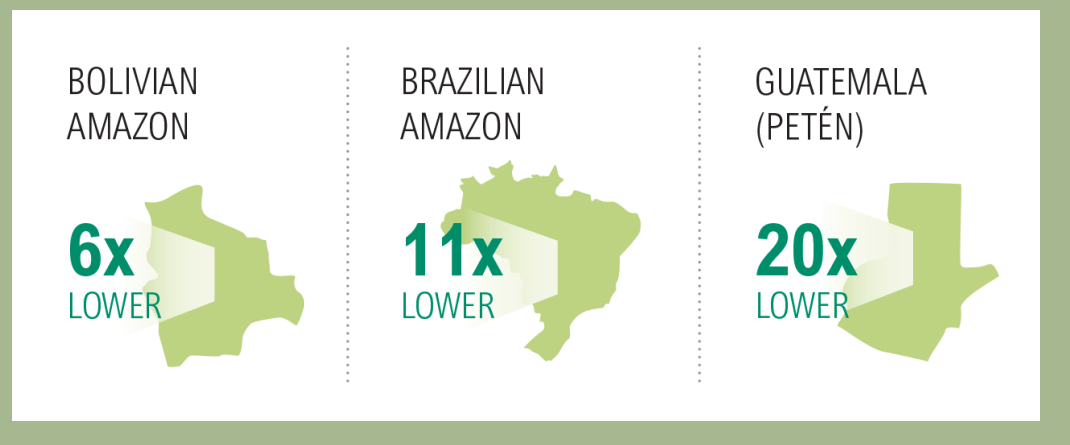
COMPARATIVE GLOBAL RESEARCH INDICATES THAT WHERE COMMUNITIES HAVE LEGAL RIGHTS TO THEIR FORESTS, AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS PROTECTING THESE RIGHTS, DEFORESTATION RATES ARE SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER WITHIN COMMUNITY FORESTS THAN OUTSIDE THEM.

Source: World Resources Institute and the Rights and Resources Initiative (2015)

#### Context & Facts

- Secure tenure is widely recognized as an essential foundation for achieving a range of rural economic development goals.
- Some 65% of the world's lands are held by indigenous peoples and local communities under customary tenure systems; however only 18% of this land is recognized as owned or controlled by communities under national laws (RRI 2016).
- National strategies for REDD+ frequently identify weak forest tenure as an impediment to successful REDD+ outcomes.
- Research suggests that trees and forests are more important to rural women's livelihoods than to those of men. In one Madagascar community, poor women earn 37 percent of their income from forest products, whereas men earn 22 percent. In some areas of Andhra Pradesh, India, 77 percent of women's income is derived from forests (FAO, 2010b)

#### DEFORESTATION INSIDE LEGALLY RECOGNIZED COMMUNITY FORESTS VS. OUTSIDE THOSE AREAS



Source: World Resources Institute, [www.wri.org/securingrights](http://www.wri.org/securingrights)

#### WHAT IS FOREST SMART?

"Forest-smart" is a development approach that recognizes forests' significance for sustaining growth across many sectors, including agriculture, energy, infrastructure, and water. It transforms how sectors operate by identifying opportunities for mutual benefit and creating practical solutions that can be implemented at scale. Forest-smart solutions support development outcomes and impact such as improved food security, green growth, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

## How is securing forest tenure forest-smart?

Securing forest tenure lays the foundation for effective programs across sectors (e.g. forestry, agriculture, energy, mining, and climate change). This is especially true for climate finance programs that involve Payments for Results, where results and benefits depend on clear secure land and resource tenure arrangements. In the context of the role of forests in climate change mitigation, research indicates that securing forest tenure is linked to lowering deforestation rates and ensures the success of REDD+ strategies and programs.

Yet the world's most biodiverse and carbon-rich forests are often found in low and middle-income countries where forest ownership rights and arrangements are ill-defined, contested, or insecure because of limited government presence and capacity. Since tenure systems are often based on customary and collective rights, the questions of who owns the forests, who claims them, who has access to them, and how to manage overlapping use and access rights, are deeply contested in many forest regions of the world.

Without secure forest tenure, forest-dependent groups, especially indigenous and women, continue to be among the poorest and most politically marginalized communities in their national contexts. However, the international community is increasingly recognizing that attaining

secure tenure of forest resources contributes to poverty alleviation and sustainable forest management. For example, the World Bank is bringing attention to establishing legal and institutional structures for forest dependent communities as a necessary condition for more sustainable projects, as these communities will have the basis to improve their socioeconomic conditions, invest in the resources they own, and contribute to project development goals.

## PROFOR's Program on Securing Forest Tenure for Rural Development

Despite growing recognition and attention to the importance of forest tenure security, significant gaps remain in terms of methodologies, tools and knowledge resources that would enable policy makers and practitioners to strengthen forest tenure and avoid negative impacts within relevant projects and initiatives. These gaps include (i) comprehensive analytical frameworks to help identify the key factors that need to be in place for the recognition and protection of forest tenure rights, particularly customary and collective rights, (ii) methodologies for assessing the presence or absence of these factors, particularly in national contexts, and (iii) knowledge resources that bring together best practices and solutions for addressing and resolving these gaps.

## Addressing Gender Disparities in Securing Forest Tenure

Studies show that men and women take part in different roles in forest resource use, management and decision-making. Although women have stronger interactions with and dependence on forest resources, they also have the most insecure forest tenure. Therefore, an important dimension of the program is to understand the gender-differentiated impacts of investments in forest areas and ways to ensure gender equity is safeguarded and enhanced under tenure reforms. A gender gap assessment and the identification of strategies and actions to address these gaps will be incorporated as a core element of the analytical framework and country assessments. The forest tenure will actively incorporate best practices to meaningfully include women in the design and implementation of projects and policies.

## What approach is PROFOR using?

PROFOR's Program on Securing Forest Tenure for Rural Development will address these gaps by conducting the following activities:

1. Develop an Analytical Framework for understanding and assessing forest tenure frameworks and their implementation with a focus on securing tenure of indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities. This activity is already underway and addresses the first gap in identifying key factors for recognizing and protecting forest tenure rights, while also providing a basis for the development of practical tools for national assessments and for increasing the sharing of experiences and solutions for improved forest tenure security.
2. Conduct assessments (gap analysis) and dialogues on the forest tenure situation in approximately three to six high-priority countries.
3. Develop a sourcebook (or "solutions bank") of best practices and related tools on ways to address obstacles and improving the development and implementation of forest tenure reforms. The sourcebook will be designed as a living document—to be updated to accommodate new innovations, case studies and further applications of the Analytical Framework.

These activities will ensure that policy makers, practitioners and stakeholders can accurately identify the key factors that affect security of forest tenure and reflect these in the design of future products and interventions.

For more information about this program, visit <http://profor.info/>

Interested in learning more? Contact our communications focal point : Laura Ivers: laivers@worldbankgroup.org

The Program on Forests (PROFOR) multi-donor partnership generates innovative, cutting-edge knowledge and tools to advance sustainable management of forests for poverty reduction, economic growth, climate mitigation and adaptation, and conservation benefits. Through its programs, PROFOR is advancing forest-smart development, which recognizes forests' significance for sustaining growth across many sectors, including agriculture, energy, infrastructure, and water.



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