

Strengthening Land Rights Recognition in Forestlands

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SUMMARY

Millions of people, including many Indigenous Peoples, experience a lack of secure tenure to their land holdings in forests. Often, their land holdings overlap with state-designated forestlands that impose legal restrictions on the recognition and formalization of land rights leading to tenure insecurity. Tenure insecurity exposes these people to a higher risk of losing their land holdings but also disincentivizes long-term sustainable land investments, such as tree planting and sustainable forest management.

It is increasingly acknowledged that tenure security significantly impacts sustainable forest management. This recognition has prompted multiple international platforms, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, to emphasize the crucial role of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' tenure security in combating deforestation, climate change, and biodiversity loss.

Therefore, this report examines emerging global knowledge and good practices in recognition and formalization of all types of tenure (private, communal, and public) within forestlands to guide decision-makers, practitioners and other stakeholders working on the topic. The report presents: i) a systematic review of studies measuring the impact of land tenure interventions on forest cover; ii) the status of land rights recognition and formalization in the forestlands of the East Asia and Pacific Region; and iii) good practices for the recognition and formalization of land rights in forestlands.

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