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Community forestry models in Asia-Pacific

Community forests in Indonesia (hutan kemasyarakatan)

Infosheet

In Indonesia, there are five types of community forestry models: community forests, village forests, community plantation forests, forestry partnerships and customary forests. Indonesia's community forests model (hutan kemasyarakatan) enables farmer groups to manage and harvest products from select production or protection forests. The model's legal basis is set out in the Forestry Act of 1999 and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry Regulation No. 9/2021 on social forestry management. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry oversees the implementation of community forestry.

Key requirements

Who is eligible?

A community forest must be managed by a community organized as a forest farmers' group, which must form one or more business groups that generates income.

Allocation process

1. An applicant must prepare the following documents before applying for legal access to the forest area: application letter; list of all applicants in the group, with copies of identity cards and family cards; list of administrators; profile of the area; map of the area with minimum 1:50,000 scale, in a printed version and as a digital shapefile; and letter of group formation or deed of establishment of a cooperative.
2. The applicant submits a physical or electronic letter of application to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry.
3. The Ministry assigns the director general for Social Forestry and Environmental Partnerships to oversee the permit.
4. The director general assigns an administrative team and a technical team to review the application.
5. The administrative team verifies all the administrative aspects within three days of receiving the documents. If the documents are incomplete or not eligible, the team returns them to the applicant.
6. The applicant has 14 days to improve the documents and return them to the Ministry. If the applicant does not meet this deadline, the application is automatically cancelled.
7. If the documents pass administrative verification, the application proceeds for technical verification.
8. If the application fulfils the requirements, the director general for Social Forestry and Environmental Partnerships issues the permit on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. If the application does not qualify, the director general rejects it.

Main elements



Duration of tenure

- Tenure is 35 years and is extendable.



Type and condition of forest

- Community forests are either production forests or protection forests.
- In Java, the maximum forest area is 1,000 hectares per management group and 15 hectares per household. Outside Java, the maximum forest area is 5,000 hectares per management group and 15 hectares per household.
- For palm oil plantations carried out by individuals, the maximum forest area is 5 hectares per person. The individual must have lived in or around the forest area continuously for at least five years.
- The law does not specify the condition of the forest.



Type and duration of management plan

- The social forestry management plan covers institutional strengthening, forest use, a business workplan and a monitoring and evaluation plan.
- The duration is 35 years and is extendable.
- The directorate general for Social Forestry and Environmental Partnerships evaluates the management of the forest every five years.
- Annual workplans provide detailed descriptions and timelines for implementation.



Internal governance

- The communities are required to form a forest farmers' group, a combination of forest farmers' groups or a combination of cooperatives, as well as social forestry business units. The legal framework does not specify how the members should organize themselves and operate.



Gender and social inclusion

- The Ministry of Environment and Forestry Regulation No. 9/2021 on social forestry management states that women and men should have equal opportunity and access in obtaining a social forestry permit.
- The implementation of all forms of social forestry should have targets that include gender equality and inclusive participation,

especially for women, youth and marginalized groups.

- The Forestry Act of 1999 does not mention gender or social inclusion.
- The Ministry of Environment and Forestry Regulation P. 31/2017 provides guidance to the Ministry's staff on how to promote gender equality and equity in the forestry sector by ensuring that their programs and activities consider gender issues.



Community-based enterprises

- Forest farmers' groups must form business groups in line with the business models they are developing. One forest farmers' group can have multiple business groups, such as a rattan business group, a handicraft business group, an ecotourism business group and so on.
- The government supports business groups to develop a business plan and provides capacity-building, loans, facilities, equipment and materials, such as production machinery, fertilizer and seedlings.



Benefit-sharing mechanism

- The Ministry of Environment and Forestry Regulation 9/2021 does not explicitly discuss any benefit-sharing mechanism. Community forest users usually decide among themselves how to share the benefits.



External support

- The local government provides guidance and assistance to the permit-holders through its agencies responsible for forestry, such as the Technical Implementation Unit, the Forest Management Unit and the Community Forestry Acceleration Working Group, and/or facilitators.



Conflict-resolution mechanism

- An evaluation of the community forest takes place at least every five years. Among other things, this evaluation verifies the existence and implementation of standard operating procedures for resolving conflicts and/or disputes relating to natural resources management through internal documents and conflict-resolution reports.
- The Ministry of Environment and Forestry Regulation No. 9/2021 does not specify the conflict-resolution procedure.



Rights and responsibilities of community members

Members have rights to:

- obtain protection from interference on environmental destruction and pollution or acquisition by other parties.
- manage and use the management permit in accordance with local wisdom, such as through farming cooperation.
- benefit from the genetic resources that exist in the area.
- develop a forestry-based productive economy.
- obtain assistance in managing the area and conflict resolution.
- obtain assistance in business partnerships.
- obtain assistance for preparing the management plan, the business workplan and the annual workplan.
- fair treatment for all.

Members must:

- perform forest protection and security.
- carry out the administration of forest products.
- implement a silvicultural system.
- submit a report on the implementation of community forestry.
- mark the boundaries of their forest area.
- pay non-tax state revenue for forest use in accordance with the statutory regulations.
- carry out activities in accordance with the business cooperation agreement.

- maintain the forest's function.
- maintain social stability and social cohesion.
- plant 100 trees per hectare, in the case of a palm oil plantation, after within a year of the social forestry management plan approval. After 25 years, the palm trees are dismantled.

Members cannot:

- transfer the social forestry management rights to other parties.
- plant palm oil trees in the social forestry area.
- pledge the social forestry area.
- cut down trees in the social forestry area that is classified as protected forest.
- use mechanical equipment in the social forestry area that is classified as protected forest.
- build facilities that could change the landscape in the social forestry area that is classified as protected forest.
- rent out the social forestry area to other parties.
- use the social forestry area for different purposes.

Links with climate change policies and targets

- There is no legal requirement for communities to integrate climate vulnerability, adaptation or mitigation activities into their community forest management plans. However, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry Regulation No. 9/2021 on social forestry management refers to opportunities for community forest users to provide environmental services.
- The National Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation, published in 2014, emphasizes strengthening forest management, including through community forests and other forms of social forestry, to protect and preserve local ecosystem services. The plan has no specific actions related to social forestry for 2013–2025.
- In 2022, Indonesia's updated Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement on climate change emphasized the role of social forestry in tackling climate change and its impacts:
 - It states that sustainable forest management, including social forestry, would contribute to Indonesia's unconditional target of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases by 31.9 percent, when compared to the business-as-usual scenario, by 2030.
 - It identifies social forestry among the steps Indonesia has taken to reduce emissions in the land-use sector and acknowledges the active participation of subnational governments, the private sector, small and medium-sized enterprises, civil society organizations, local and adat (customary) communities and women.
 - It includes social forestry among the programs for enhancing the resilience of ecosystems and landscapes to climate change. It highlights strategies for strengthening the engagement of local and customary communities in social forestry development, strengthening implementation of the landscape approach in social forestry and implementing environment-friendly technologies in social forestry.
- Community forests and other forms of social forestry are integral to Indonesia's strategy for turning its forestry and land-use sector from a net emitter of carbon into a net sink by 2030. The Forestry and Land Use Net Sink 2030 Operational Plan emphasizes that social forestry can reduce the risk of deforestation and increase forest cover by resolving conflicts over land and protecting forest areas. It also refers to social forestry as a solution for improving forest areas by encouraging communities to implement agroforestry.

Read more

- RECOFTC, *Special Report: How community forests boosted pandemic resilience across Asia-Pacific*, www.recoftc.org/special-report/community-forestry-boosted-pandemic-resilience
- RECOFTC, *Special Report: Communities are improving lives and landscapes in Southeast Asia through social forestry*, www.recoftc.org/stories/special-report-communities-are-improving-lives-and-landscapes-southeast-asia-through-social
- Find out more about RECOFTC's work in Indonesia at www.recoftc.org/indonesia



We believe in a future where people live equitably and sustainably in and beside healthy, resilient forests. We take a long-term, landscape-based and inclusive approach to supporting local communities to secure their land and resource rights, stop deforestation, find alternative livelihoods and foster gender equity. We are the only non-profit organization of our kind in Asia and the Pacific. We have more than 30 years of experience working with people and forests, and have built trusting relationships at all levels. Our influence and partnerships extend from multilateral institutions to governments, private sector and local communities. Our innovations, knowledge and initiatives enable countries to foster good forest governance, mitigate and adapt to climate change, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda.


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