



Report

How RECOFTC and community forestry contribute to the Global Goals

Reflections on 2021–2022



How RECOFTC and community forestry contribute to the Global Goals Reflections on 2021–2022

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Reflections on 2021–2022

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July 2023

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Foreword

RECOFTC's work helps countries and communities in the Asia-Pacific region achieve the Global Goals on poverty, hunger, the environment, climate change, gender equality and decent work. Our entry point to sustainable development and climate change solutions is community forestry.

We work at the forefront of modern global development where some of the world's most diverse and unique landscapes are at risk of destruction. We help build the capacity of communities to transform conflict into collaboration.

This report describes the links between RECOFTC's fiscal year 2021–2022 work and the Global Goals, also known as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It details how we work to achieve a world where people live equitably and sustainably in and beside healthy, resilient forests. And it shows our commitment to ensuring that our planet is fit for future generations.

Chandra Silori
Deputy Executive Director, RECOFTC



RECOFTC and community forestry contribute to the Global Goals

RECOFTC believes in a world in which people live equitably and sustainably in and beside healthy, resilient forests. Our long-term, inclusive, landscape-based approach helps local communities secure their land and resource rights, reduce deforestation, diversify their livelihoods and foster gender equality.

RECOFTC is the only non-profit organization of its kind in the Asia-Pacific region. We have more than 35 years of experience working with people and forests in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam. We have built trusting relationships with partners at all levels. Our influence and partnerships extend from multilateral institutions and governments to the private sector and local communities.

Our overarching aim is to help our focal countries achieve the Global Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Our innovations, knowledge and initiatives enable countries to foster good forest governance and mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The four goals of RECOFTC's Strategic Plan 2018–2023 promote sustainable development and climate change solutions across the Asia-Pacific region. To achieve these goals, we work to ensure that communities that depend on forests have secure rights and can participate equitably in decisions that affect their livelihoods.

The four RECOFTC goals put people at the centre of development:

1. Landscape collaboration in a changing climate
2. Governance, institutions and conflict transformation
3. Private sector engagement and enterprising communities
4. Social inclusion, gender equity and public action

RECOFTC's goals create the conditions necessary for communities to transform their landscapes and for countries to help achieve the Global Goals.

RECOFTC tracks its work and progress in relation to the Global Goals with two data-collection methods per fiscal year, as reflected in this report. The Output Reporting Tool focuses on quantitative data that are collected twice a year from all seven country office teams and the main office team. The Outcome Harvesting Tool focuses on the qualitative data collected once a year from RECOFTC country teams.

In fiscal year 2021–2022 and through 27 projects that involved 238 partners, RECOFTC staff worked with a total of 15,802 rural residents, government officials and private sector business people. Together, we helped communities strengthen their community forests and tenure rights at the landscape level. This work contributed to the growth of community forestry areas, which is the foundation for achieving many of the Global Goals and the Paris Agreement. It also had an estimated reach of influence to more than 5.1 million people.

RECOFTC's work to achieve its four Strategic Plan goals links with all 17 Global Goals because they are all ultimately about poverty reduction and increased human and planet well-being. But as this report highlights, RECOFTC's work in FY 2021–2022 most closely aligned with the following seven Global Goals and 27 of their targets.



Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

We know that when the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities are clear and strong, they are the best stewards of our forests and other precious ecosystems. When Indigenous Peoples and local communities have secure rights, they are more able to make long-term investments in the sustainable management of their lands. This contributes to reversing degradation and halting biodiversity loss and to producing products that feed and support urban populations.

Indigenous and local communities living in or near forests build social safety nets for us all while mitigating climate change and other natural disasters. Through training, research and technical assistance, RECOFTC helps Indigenous Peoples and local communities secure their tenure and community forest rights and to more sustainably and equitably manage and benefit from them.

Our work in FY 2021–2022 most closely aligned with three of the Goal's 12 targets:

Target

- 15.1** By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements
- 15.2** By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally
- 15.6** Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed



Supported

444

communities to gain approval for their community forests, representing

68,195

households

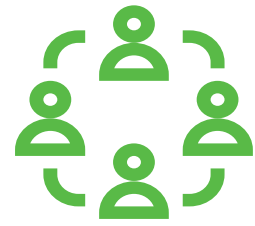


481,410

total hectares of community forest

In FY 2021–2022, RECOFTC worked with 444 communities, representing 68,195 households, to gain formal approval of their stewardship over their community forest. A total of 481,410 hectares of community forestry were under direct RECOFTC support. We worked with 238 partners in our seven focal countries towards achieving our goals, hand in hand with the Global Goals.

We conducted two research studies that contributed to sustainable natural resources management. RECOFTC and partners influenced actors in 24 situations to take action related to forest management at the landscape level that engages and benefits local people. These situations included renovating a dumping site that borders a community forest in Cambodia; supporting a village in Indonesia that adopted the community forestry approach for using local natural resources for daily needs; and helping teak smallholders in Lao PDR ask local government authorities to cancel the prohibition on smallholders harvesting and selling timber.



in collaboration
with
238
partners



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Community forestry promotes the restoration of forest biodiversity and carbon storage. RECOFTC's programs build the capacities of local communities for climate change mitigation (REDD+) and adaptation. They also promote social safeguards and fair benefit-sharing from carbon trading systems and other forest product marketing.

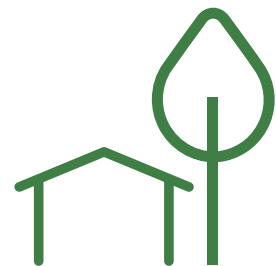
Forest conservation, which is a vital component of fighting climate change, is impossible without people gaining economic benefit from forests. Through training, we support community forest enterprises as a powerful solution to generate interest among communities to protect forests and manage them sustainably for long-term benefits. These enterprises help empower the communities that depend on forests to build up their economic resilience.

RECOFTC also works with communities to plant and look after trees that will help restore degraded forests and increase carbon storage.

In FY 2021–2022, this work towards reducing carbon dioxide emissions and contributing to the reduction of the global temperature most closely aligned with three of the five targets of Goal 13:

Target

- 13.1** Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries
- 13.2** Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning
- 13.3** Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning



430
forest
users' groups



293,302
hectares
managed with climate
change mitigation and
adaptation ambitions

RECOFTC supported community forest users' groups in the Asia-Pacific region to build climate change responses into their community forestry management plans.

Of the 444 approved community forests that RECOFTC worked directly with during FY 2021–2022, 430 community forest users' groups included climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions in their community forestry management plans. These 430 users' groups manage a total of 293,302 hectares of forest. They use strategies that respond to climate change threats in their communities and ultimately contribute to countries in the region meeting the global sustainability and climate change goals.

In FY 2021–2022, RECOFTC published 354 communication and knowledge products about community forestry and climate change on its website and in other open forums. In five situations, RECOFTC and partners influenced actors to take action related to climate change mitigation and adaptation. These situations entailed using agroforestry techniques, planting trees, growing vegetables and harvesting bamboo on community land in Cambodia; creating a tree nursery in Thailand; and instituting participatory forest fire monitoring for forest protection and management as well as sustainable bamboo harvesting and silviculture in Viet Nam.



354

communication and
knowledge products
about community
forestry and climate
change



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Gender equality is a fundamental human right and a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Through the pledge to 'leave no one behind', countries have committed to fast-track progress prioritizing those furthest behind. This fifth Goal aims for women and girls to have equal rights and opportunities and live without discrimination.

RECOFTC recognizes that our work on climate change and poverty alleviation will only succeed when solutions respect the views, aspirations and tenure rights of all members of forest communities. Part of the work involves developing 'gender leaders' among women and men in the forestry sector in all seven focal countries. These gender leaders pursue activities aimed at preventing gender-based discrimination and developing women foresters' potential.

RECOFTC also provides training and development support for women in community forestry management positions.

RECOFTC's work in FY 2021–2022 aligned most closely with at least five of the Goal's nine targets:

Target

- 5.1** End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- 5.5** Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- 5.a** Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws



1,354
women of
4,957
community
forestry
committee
members



8
people with
disabilities in
community forestry
management
committees

5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women

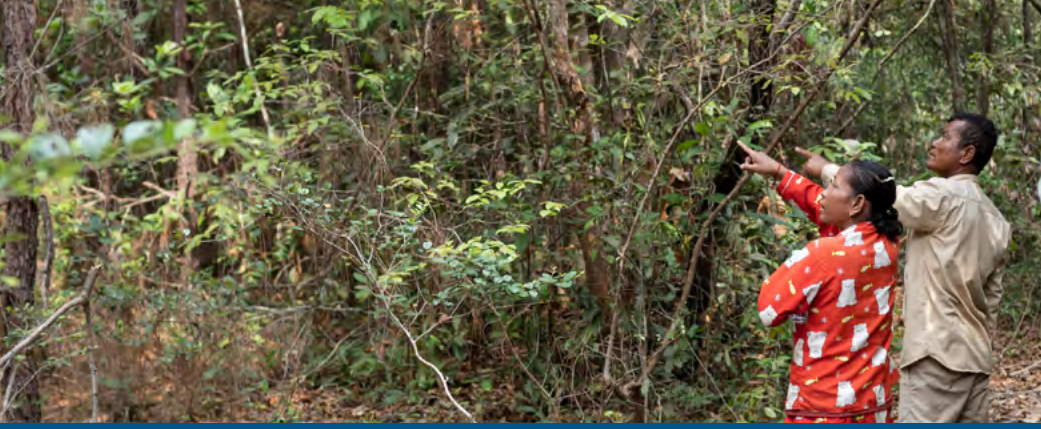
5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

In FY 2021–2022, approximately 27 percent of the community forestry management committee members in RECOFTC’s program areas were women. Those committees also included eight people living with disabilities and 562 representatives of Indigenous Peoples. The number of gender champions with the capacity to enhance and promote gender equality increased to 52 women and seven men.



562

representatives of
Indigenous Peoples
in community
forestry management
committees



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Conflict, insecurity, weak institutions and limited access to justice remain great threats to sustainable development. RECOFTC works with vulnerable groups, such as Indigenous Peoples and people in remote areas, who are at great risk of conflict over the management of the resources under their stewardship.

RECOFTC's programs help communities secure their rights to the forests where they live. Secure rights encompasses recognizing their stewardship over the extraction of the resources for the purposes of conservation and to avoid conflicts. This includes strengthening grassroots organizations, such as community forestry management committees, and carrying out capacity-building programs to ensure accountability and inclusive decision-making.

This work most closely aligned in FY 2021–2022 with two of the Goal's 12 targets:

Target

- 16.6** Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
- 16.7** Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

In FY 2021–2022, a total of 17,682 members of community forest users' groups participated in policy dialogues or other events. These events gave them the opportunity to voice their concerns related to sustainable natural resource management. This resulted in the empowerment and participation of women and men from vulnerable groups in peace, development and democratic processes. Additionally in FY 2021–2022, 11,296 community members participated in social inclusion and gender equity-related events that RECOFTC organized with more than 200 partners. These programs help reduce discrimination, marginalization and the exclusion of people living in fragile contexts in RECOFTC's seven focal countries.



17,682
community forest users' group members joined advocacy, lobbying or policy dialogues



4,868
women and
6,428
men participated in social inclusion and gender equity-related events organized by RECOFTC and partners



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Sustained and inclusive economic growth must drive the world’s progress, create decent jobs for all and improve living standards. RECOFTC’s programs, typically in remote areas, change local communities’ quality of life for the better. They introduce sustainable ways to improve their incomes while protecting biodiversity and the well-being of natural resources.

In addition to supporting community forest enterprises, a hallmark of RECOFTC’s programming is the spread of forest- and landscape-based community business partnership agreements between local entrepreneurs and investors. These agreements help ensure a fair deal for local communities and protection of the forest resources under their stewardship.

RECOFTC’s work in FY 2021–2022 most closely aligned with four of the 12 targets of Goal 8:

Target

- 8.2** Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value-added and labour-intensive sectors
- 8.4** Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead



66
RECOFTC-supported individual community-based enterprises, with

40
women of 90 members



52
group community-based enterprises, with

668
women of the 1,459 total group members



30

community business
partnership
agreements
developed by local
entrepreneurs and
investors

- 8.5** Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- 8.6** By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training

In FY 2021–2022, RECOFTC supported 66 individual community-based enterprises that involved 40 women and 50 men, and 52 group enterprises with a total of 1,459 members, 668 of them women. Of the 30 forest- or landscape-based community business partnership agreements developed by local entrepreneurs and investors, 19 were formal and 11 were informal. They covered partnerships for enterprises such as teak and acacia wood production and processing, rattan and bamboo harvesting, plant nurseries, herbal products, weaving, handicrafts and community tourism.



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

The Goal primarily speaks to quality primary, secondary and tertiary education and literacy. However, the inclusion of lifelong learning asks for a stronger role for adult learning and education in global education agendas and policies.

RECOFTC's work responds by helping increase skills and knowledge among rural populations, especially women, on forest management, restoring biodiversity and forest resource-based entrepreneurial opportunities to strengthen livelihoods. A free online e-course launched in 2020 introduces community forestry as a path to solving the world's greatest social and environmental challenges.

In 2021, RECOFTC launched a new e-learning course, Policy Analysis and Forest Governance. Also free, it introduces policy analysis as a path to improving forest governance, empowering local people living in or near forests and creating a more sustainable and equitable socio-environment dynamic.

These directions most closely aligned in FY 2021–2022 with two of the Goal's 10 targets while they also related to other Goals:

Target

- 4.4** Substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship



2,404
women and men trained on sustainable and efficient use of natural resources

4.7 By 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development



2,362
women and
men enrolled
in one of two
e-courses

In FY 2021–2022, RECOFTC trained 2,595 women and men on community forestry and sustainable development topics related to tenure security, climate change, social inclusion and more. Among them, 2,362 women and men enrolled in one of the two e-courses:

- Policy Analysis and Forest Governance 101 targets civil society organizations for training on analysing policy in the forest governance context
- Community Forestry 101 centres on community-led forest management for sustainable development and inclusive climate change solutions

In total, 11 percent of enrollees completed their course. This is considered above the industry average of 7–10 percent for completion of massive open online courses according to a 2021 study by Fu et al.



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

This Goal reflects that worldwide consumption and production are driving forces of the global economy. And that the economy is contingent upon the use of the natural environment and resources in a way that continues to have destructive impacts on the planet.

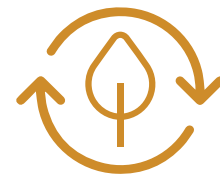
Community forestry is a safeguard for the sustainable use of natural resources. Sustainable consumption and production can contribute substantially to poverty alleviation and moving to low-carbon and green economies.

By fostering partnerships between the private sector and local communities that sustainably managed their forests in FY 2021-2022, RECOFTC most closely aligned with at least two of the Goal's 11 targets:

Target

- 12.2** Achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources
- 12.8** Ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature

In FY 2021–2022, RECOFTC trained 2,595 women and men on the sustainable and efficient use of natural resources. And 441 of them were also trained on sustainable investment and community-based enterprise development.



2,595
women and
men trained in
sustainable and
efficient use of
natural resources

441
of them also trained
on sustainable
investment and
community-
based enterprise
development



At RECOFTC, 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 35 years of experience working with people and forests, and have built trusting relationships with partners 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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