



# ENSURING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN FOREST DECISION-MAKING

Advancing Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality through community forestry in Asia and the Pacific

Annual Report 2015-2016  
RECOFTC - The Center for People and Forests



# FOREWORD

## From the Executive Director and the Board Chairperson

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. These 17 goals build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with the inclusion of new areas that are highly relevant to community forestry: climate change, forestry, economic equality, innovation, sustainable consumption, and peace and justice. Like the aims of community forestry, the SDGs are interconnected – often the key to success on one involves addressing issues associated with another.

Community forestry – as promoted by RECOFTC – provides an effective and cross-cutting solution that is aligned with the SDGs. This includes SDG goal 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. RECOFTC has long understood that the long-term viability of community forest management is dependent on the inclusion of women. RECOFTC works to ensure that policies and programs of forestry stakeholders mainstream gender dimensions so that they are not at risk of creating or exacerbating inequalities, and ignoring women's contribution to livelihoods. Thus in this annual report, RECOFTC highlights our achievements that contribute to SDG 5.

In addition to the work on SDG 5, our work is guided by a set of values that enable the achievement of positive impacts and contributions to several SDGs. RECOFTC is well positioned to present local people's concerns in global discussions on forests and to drive debates, particularly on the social dimension of emerging political, economic and environmental issues that will impact the SDGs' level of success. Forests that are owned and managed by communities, as well as individual households, are anticipated to double in size, with countries like Cambodia, Indonesia and Myanmar contributing significant lands to local ownership and recognizing customary rights.

Going into the next Strategic Plan (2018-2023), RECOFTC will continue to explore new and innovative approaches that incorporate a gender-sensitive programming approach in all of its program interventions, encouraging gender mainstreaming into project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Gender equality will continue to cut across all of RECOFTC's thematic areas. For example, RECOFTC will focus on encouraging gender-sensitive benefit distribution mechanisms in forestry and climate change programs that further promote gender equality in natural resource management, conflict mitigation strategies, small scale forest enterprise development, and participatory land use planning. Through strengthening women's leadership skills, key stakeholders will be empowered to exercise greater decision-making roles and ensure their needs are met in natural resource management efforts.

Targeted training and capacity development will allow women to serve more effectively at the national, provincial, and/or community levels, as well as in universities and key institutions where they work. By providing technical support to organizations it will be possible to improve the capacity of these organizations to address issues related to gender inclusion and women's empowerment, both of which will strengthen organizations themselves.

However, these capacity development efforts will not be fully effective if they are not supported by an enabling policy environment that recognizes and values women's roles and responsibilities. RECOFTC seeks to raise awareness of and advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment on forestry, natural resource management, and climate change issues. To achieve this, RECOFTC will facilitate policy analyses, dialogue and networking at the national and regional levels, supported by a targeted communications strategy and lessons learned to ensure wider reach and impact.

Through supporting the SDGs, RECOFTC's vision of empowering local people to be effectively and equitably engaged in the sustainable management of forested landscapes will be achieved. RECOFTC stands ready to work with partners in and beyond its focal countries to achieve the SDGs and other global commitments.



**Dr. David Ganz**  
Executive Director  
RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests



**Dr. Doris Capistrano**  
Chairperson, Board of Trustees  
RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests

# WOMEN'S FULL AND EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP

## TARGET 5.5

### Gender bias and forests: Why women must be included in forest decision-making

At the community level, reasons for women's exclusion from decision-making instances range from heavy competing demands for their time, to their limited access to information on forest management, and low levels of formal education in many rural contexts. Women's exclusion also results from their lack of a recognized role in public forums, and norms of silence leave them feeling out of place in this domain. Such exclusions have implications for sustainable forest management, as the specific interests and expertise of excluded groups are ignored, and

inequitable access to decision-making and benefits, forest stewardship is discouraged. More fundamentally, exclusion infringes on social justice and human rights to acquire information and participate in decision-making.

The stories presented here are examples on the individual level of how RECOFTC programmes are working to address gender bias in community forestry.

(Excerpt from: *Gender bias affects forests worldwide*, available at <https://ojs.ethnobiology.org/index.php/eb/article/view/834/480> )

## Lao PDR's National Commission for Advancement of Women become gender and forest champions



When the government of Lao PDR established the National Commission for the Advancement of Women (NCAW) under the Department of Forestry (DoF) in 2003, it envisioned an institutional body that would advocate for gender equality and gender-mainstreamed practices in the forestry sector. However, most members of NCAW soon found that their understanding of gender was superficial and they lacked capacities to carry out the vision.

Lomkham Sengchanoudom, a member of the NCAW, recalled that she occasionally heard the term 'gender' but was unsure about what gender equality in forest management really meant or the importance of discussing it with local governments and communities. That changed when RECOFTC, through the Grassroots Capacity Building for REDD+ in Asia project, engaged with NCAW in 2015 to provide capacity building for key forestry

stakeholders in gender mainstreaming in climate change and sustainable forest management. The project partnered with members of NCAW, who took roles as trainers, to raise awareness about gender equality and gender mainstreaming to local forestry officials and community representatives through a series of workshops and trainings on the issues.

In the training, RECOFTC introduced participatory facilitation approaches to learning, using a range of different tools and techniques, such as role-plays, that encouraged two-way learning, personal reflection and inclusivity. Through these processes, the NCAW trainers, who were mostly female, were not only empowered to lead the activities, they also gained in-depth understanding on gender sensitivity as well as the concept and practical skills of gender mainstreaming. This helped them to boost their confidence in working with local

government officials and community leaders and members to recognize the importance of mainstreaming gender in forest management, such as understanding the different roles and workloads men and women have in their daily activities in regards to forests. To promote gender equality, these roles must be identified, shared and transformed. The programme has led to transformative attitudinal change and increased skills to address inequality, the benefits of which will continue to develop for years to come.

More importantly, Lomkham saw how her improved facilitation skills helped local women and men to voice their opinions. "From the trainings, I learned how to encourage community members to actively participate in discussion using

techniques that are easy for them to understand, relate to their daily lives, and encourage them to be confident," she said.

Vilapanh Chanthavisouk, another member of NCAW and a DoF official, found that the resources and trainings provided allowed him to conduct his work better. "It was my first time to be involved in awareness raising on gender issues related to forests. As a man, I found it a challenge to support NCAW due to my lack of clear understanding on gender. The skills that I gained have increased my confidence to facilitate learning, explain the concept to the community, and promote gender equality in village forestry," said Vilapanh.

## Women take the lead to revitalize a community forest user group in Nepal



Manmati Bohara, a 44-year old woman, is the treasurer of the Shiva Shankar Community Forest User Group (CFUG) in Jogbudha, in Dadeladhura. Over the past four years, her role as an executive committee member of the user group changed from silent attendee to an active and committed leader.

When she was first named the treasurer of the committee in 2012, she had little understanding about what the committee was about or what the position entailed. She was only told by a committee member that a senior male leader of the village had proposed that she take on the position. "I felt I should not complain or reject the offer as he was a senior and respected person of my village. I was quite unaware of the roles and responsibility of the position," Manmati explains. "I used to join the meetings but always remained silent and just signed the attendance registration. Everything was done by the (male) Chairperson and Secretary. But then I heard from the District Forest office that a warrant was out for our whole committee for illegal timber harvesting. I was surprised and almost fainted when I heard the news. Everybody in my house and village started behaving differently around me as I was seen as an illegal harvester. Later I learned that my signature was misused for that purpose."

Eventually, Manmati was able to explain that she had no role in illegal activities, however, the experience left her feeling discouraged and she even warned youth in her village not to join the CFUG. But in 2015, her experience as a committee member took a positive turn when she had the opportunity to take part in trainings jointly organized by HIMAWANTI and RECOFTC. One of the trainings was facilitated by a renowned female community forestry leader, who discussed leadership roles, rights and responsibilities.

"I was so encouraged and convinced by the training that I started convincing other women in the committee to be active and play a stronger role in securing the rights of women," Manwati reflects. As a result, the CFUG began to be revitalized in the community. More and more women are starting to play active roles in decision-making and ensuring that the committee complies with forest policies. "Now I am proud to say that, together with other women in my village, I am striving to make our CFUG one of the best in the district," says Manmati. This has resulted in increased confidence in the governance of the community, bringing with it more positive views of the future, and a stronger sense of collective action which is vital for addressing the challenges (such as illegal logging) as well as opportunities that the community faces.

## Women in Myanmar's Magway region take on advisory roles in the area's community forest management committee

In the Magway region of Myanmar, women are increasing their participation in community forestry management committees as a result of taking part in participatory capacity development events.

"Women usually didn't take part in forestry management activities, and even if they did, it was typically because they felt they didn't have a choice," observed Mr. Kyaw Nyunt, RECOFTC field coordinator.

This was the situation that the RECOFTC project Scaling Up Community Forestry faced when the project began in Magway. "We faced many challenges in the beginning, including the need to raise basic awareness about what is community forestry for both female and male members, and most importantly, to build trustful relationships," said Mr. Kyaw Nyunt.

To meet this challenge, RECOFTC, in conjunction with the local-level Forestry Department and Future Light Youth Development Organization (FLYDO), a local civil society organization, began raising awareness about community forestry and its benefits in terms of sustainable livelihoods among women and men community members through a series of participatory trainings and discussions. The inclusion of women representation from the community was always ensured in the discussions and trainings.

"I witnessed more and more local women becoming interested in getting involved in forestry through taking part in trainings on forest plantations, managing natural forests, agro-forestry and financial management," said Mr. Kyaw Nyunt.

Over time, more local women not only participated in trainings, but became involved in advisory roles in the local CF Management Committee. "It's important for women to take on these roles in forest management because women are active in using forests and have a sense of ownership to forests. They are also more present in the villages (they typically migrate less often than men)," said a trainer from FLYDO. "Women are now becoming highly capable leaders, and using their skills to systematically record and effectively convey forest-related information," the trainer added.

Currently, local communities are developing a CF Management Plan, with local women actively advising and sharing responsibilities in forest boundary planning and financial management. Altogether there are 530 Community Forest Users (CFUs), comprised of 415 males and 115 women in 11 villages. Among them, the CF management committee members comprise of 75 people, with women representation in 8 villages elected by the CFUs to take on roles as accountants and/ or secretaries with equal footing in sharing opinions over discussion and decision-making.

"There is now a shared understanding among both men and women in these communities that community forestry can contribute to making a real positive change for many people," said Mr. Kyaw Nyunt. The sense in the community is that this capacity development programme has provided much-needed foundations for ensuring the sustainability of the work of the CFUGs; including ensuring that the many challenges and opportunities facing the communities can be addressed, effectively delivering benefits for all community members.



## Scaling up community forestry in Myanmar

RECOFTC's Scaling Up Community Forestry project (SUComFor), supported by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Yangon, with the collaboration of the Forest Department from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC), works in seven project sites: Tanintharyi Region, Ayeyarwaddy Region, Bago Region, Chin State, Rakhine State, Shan State and Magway Region. These sites include Rakhine, Chin, Kayin, Mon, Pa-Oh, Innthar and Shan ethnic minority groups.

"When we first started this project, local people were doubtful about securing their tenure rights. They felt that their land would be grabbed if their community forest is successful," said Mr. Han Swe Oo, Field Coordinator of RECOFTC's SUComFor Project.

As the project continued, RECOFTC, local ethnic minority communities, local partner organizations and the Forest Department worked together to demarcate forest boundaries. In addition, local communities took part in trainings about financial management, forest governance, forest management planning, and conflict management and gained understanding on the basic concepts of community forestry, the connections between people and the forests, the core values of participation, and more.

Over time, because the local communities could see government officials getting involved and encouraging the process, local communities had more trust in community forestry.

Currently, all project villages are now developing their own CF management plan and two villages have already obtained official CF certificates. Communities are also taking initiative to post CF signboards and develop activities to conserve water and biodiversity.





## For my forest, for my people: A preacher and grassroots changemaker from Indonesia

Ms. Yuliatin, a preacher living near Meru Beriti National Park in East Java in Indonesia, had never attended any kind of training until she received an opportunity to participate in a workshop organized by RECOFTC and partners, as part of the Grassroots Capacity Building for REDD+ in Asia project in Meru Betiri National Park in East Java. The workshop was part of a program on climate change and sustainable forest management.

Yuliatin was excited to be selected as a representative of Islamic women preachers from her village to participate, “a woman participating in a training is so uncommon in our village – people just are not used to it,” she said.

At the training, Yuliatin learned about the basic concepts of climate change and how it affects local livelihoods. Being a local preacher, she used her network in the village to further share what she learned from the training program with others – starting from her family, other women preachers and community members in her village.

Inspired by this, her network of women preachers in her village organized a training for 35 women from the surrounding villages. Although organizing a training program on their own was not an easy task for Yuliatin, she continued her efforts to spread the message to more people in her community.

Acknowledging the challenges to building a better understanding among participants, Yuliatin developed a new strategy. She reached out to other religious leaders of the village to co-organize the training program and invited a facilitator from LATIN, a local civil society organization and project partner, to support her group in the training. Her strategy and networking not only yielded better training results, but also added to her confidence and leadership abilities, leading to regular sharing and training for stakeholder groups in her village.

Despite social pressures and misperceptions from some community members, Yuliatin continued to use and expand her network of women preachers to promote sustainable forest management to address climate change challenges in their own locality. In recognition of her work, RECOFTC supported Yuliatin to present her lessons learned and recommendations to the Asia Pacific Forestry Commission during Asia Pacific Forestry Week in 2016 in the Philippines, where she had the opportunity to share her story with ministers and other high-level government officials. FAO has developed a programme to address these recommendations, as it is a perfect example of a voice from the forest leading to tangible change.



## Women's group become local climate change champions in Indonesia

As a member of her village women's group in Berau, Indonesia, Rosdiana used to arrange logistics for visits from government officials to her village. As she never participated in any of the events that she arranged, she had no idea what kind of change she could bring about in her community through them. That changed when she was invited to take part in RECOFTC's Grassroots Capacity Building for REDD+ project aimed at raising local communities' awareness on climate change.

RECOFTC and Yayasan Komunitas Belajar Indonesia (YAKOBI), a local civil society organization, began raising awareness among local women on climate change issues as well as on facilitation skills so that they could have both the knowledge and skills to effectively raise awareness in the community about climate change and REDD+ issues.

After a series of workshops, Rosdiana and others participating in the trainings realized that their daily activities, such as uncontrolled harvest of forest and burning of waste, could contribute to the degradation of their environment, negatively affecting their village in the long term.

Rosdiana felt that the participatory training methods were instrumental to her learning, "The trainers did not use PowerPoint presentation, instead they used illustrations and we took part in role plays so we could understand easily. Everybody was involved and took turns to present, which encouraged us to be confident to share our ideas. Now I used the same methods and lesson materials when conducting my own awareness raising meetings in my community."

With her enhanced knowledge and facilitation skills, Rosdiana is now confident in advising her neighbors and community on how to improve their waste management, manage their community forest resources and tackle illegal logging. "Previously, our (women's group) participation at village management discussions was mainly limited to providing logistic support; now, some of us have been invited to discuss our climate change awareness-raising activities and concerns at district and provincial level meetings with high-level government officials."

With her enhanced knowledge, capacities, networks and leadership, today Rosdiana is considered the go to person in her village when it comes to climate change. In addition to having more confidence to participate in village management meetings, Rosdiana and other women are advocating for climate change related lessons to be included in the primary school curriculum in her district.

Another issue they advocated for is restoring degraded mangrove forest along their nearby coastline. The Berau district forestry service recently responded to their efforts by launching a new project with women leaders to plant 1000 trees along the coastline, along with fruit and timber trees inland.

"I am very grateful that the project recognized women's roles and invested in enhancing our knowledge and skills. Our women's group will continue to bring substantial contributions to our village."







## Forest officers in Viet Nam promote opportunities for women's participation in sustaining forests

Le Van Dinh is the Director of HCCD, a non-governmental organization in Ha Tinh Province, Viet Nam, aimed at reducing poverty and promoting community development. When he first began his work, local villagers were more concerned about higher incomes from honey hunting rather than protecting their resource base in a way that would sustain their long-term livelihoods. To change the situation, he felt he needed a firmer understanding of the issues, thus he began his learning journey with RECOFTC.

In 2015, Dinh participated in RECOFTC trainings on community forestry, REDD+, conflict management and livelihood and market development. Dinh's confidence grew and he became a trainer himself. He reached out to Vu Quang National Park (VQNP) forest protection officers to take part in his training, but he was met with skepticism. No one from the national park office attended his training, with the excuse that they were all busy.

Dinh rethought his strategy, and decided instead to target VQNP communication officers, a group who are mainly female, whose responsibility is to communicate forest management best practices. The officers were open to taking part in his training on REDD+.

Following the training, Ms. Trần Trà Thùy Dường, one of the VNQP trainees said, "I had no idea what REDD+ was and had only basic understanding of climate change. But now, I gained a clearer understanding of people, forests and climate change. I am impressed with the training methods used by Mr Dinh."

She then convinced the VQNP director that both female and male forest officers should take part in the same training. Not long after, 30 mostly young forest officers who work closely with the communities around the park showed up for Dinh's training.

Ms. Trần's decision to get involved is helping to gradually transform a community – supporting local communities in developing sustainable livelihoods, and equipping forest protection officers with critical information on climate change, REDD+, and participatory approaches to more effectively work with villagers.

Dinh has now also reached out to female members of the women's union and farmer's unions, who have taken their new knowledge forward through sharing with their neighbors and villages.

Both Ms. Trần and Dinh now make a point of ensuring that women are included not only in activities they arrange, but are encouraging their colleagues and other forest stakeholders to ensure opportunities for women's participation and to recognize women's contributions to sustaining forests.

Ultimately, by including both female and male stakeholders and working together, local communities are in a better position to sustain forests in Viet Nam.





TARGET 5.A

# WOMEN'S EQUAL RIGHTS TO ECONOMIC RESOURCES, ACCESS TO OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OVER LAND AND OTHER FORMS OF PROPERTY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

## A woman-led Cambodian forestry patrol finds ways to foster non-confrontational exchanges with illegal loggers

Borei O'svay community forest in Stung Treng Province covers 4,383 hectares of forest land that is home to 1,225 people (699 women). Established in 2013, the CF has an approved management plan, with support from RECOFTC. However, one major challenge remains: protecting CF forest from illegal loggers.

Patrolling the CF is a challenging and dangerous job that includes walking long distances and occasionally confrontations with armed illegal loggers. Nevertheless, Ms. Men Sokin, vice-chairperson of the CF management committee, not only joins but regularly leads the patrols for her community. "I voluntarily join the patrol, because I feel that resources in the CF are for everyone, so both men and women should be involved in protecting it too. At the same time, I strongly believe in avoiding violence," says Sokin.

On her patrols, she has been confronted by illegal loggers several times. However, she believes that violence can be prevented by responding in a peaceful manner. "When Ms. Men Sokin talks to illegal loggers, she stays calm and speaks peacefully, and the loggers have always listened to her. However, I've noticed that when male patrollers talk to them, they raise their voices and I fear a confrontation may happen," observes Mr. Kong Vuthy, a member of the CF management committee.

Sokin says, "In my experience participating in several patrols, I've found that patiently explaining to loggers about the forest law, CF regulations, and

how our community uses forest products in accordance with a management plan is helpful and more effective than confrontation." The patrols also always bring all legal documents along during CF patrols, so they can prove to illegal loggers that the CF is supported by local authorities.

Though illegal forest activities still occur they have noticeably declined, Cambodia's local community CF network and Provincial CF Programme Coordination Committee (both established with support from RECOFTC) are serving as effective platforms for CF members to learn best practices, share challenges and exchange strategies to cope with such difficulties. "The networks keep me confident and committed, and at the same time I am able to spread my experiences about the roles of women in forest conservation activities. I will participate not only in patrol activities, but also in other forest conservation activities, as I feel I am able to cope with any obstacles that come up," says Ms. Men Sokin.

RECOFTC and the local forest department have worked in the Borei O'svay area for several years for CF formalization, CF development and to develop local capacities in sustainable forest management and rural livelihoods through community forestry and REDD initiatives in Cambodia with support from the European Union (EU) and SDC.



## Women leaders in Thailand make their voices heard to prevent their community forest from being transformed into an industrial zone

The Ing Watershed is one of the most abundant watersheds in Thailand. The 300-kilometer long river flows from Phayao Province to Chiang Rai Province in northern Thailand before joining the Mekong River. The area is rich in natural resources and ecosystem diversity, and features forests, mountains, rivers, and watershed areas. However, the way of life of people living in the area is under threat from a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) policy.

The local community in Ban Boonrueng village, Chiang Rai province, learned of plans for an SEZ that would convert the wetland into other uses, adversely affecting the land tenure rights of the community. To understand the situation better and discuss what they could do about it, women leaders in the Ban Boonrueng community gathered together. They decided to identify upcoming relevant events and planning activities, where they could make their voices heard in an effort to influence development of the industrial zone.

The plan would not have been possible without RECOFTC and partners' project in the Ing watershed, supported by the EU, which developed capacities of Ban Boonrueng villagers and women leaders to conduct research on their forest. The research provided the community with evidence to present to authorities and the media to show that the

Boonrueng watershed community forest has been sustained by villagers in the area for more than one hundred years. By combining their local wisdom on natural resource management with their way of life, the community has successfully developed traditional irrigation, and management zones for community forestry, watershed preservation and fisheries that are sustaining their forest.

Furthermore, their research also shows the diversity of flora and fauna species in the area. Having such evidence is significant because people in the village, especially the women's groups, depend on the forest for food and income.

In addition to developing capacities for conducting research, the project also supported local communities to form an Ing Watershed network that includes community leaders, civil society groups, women's groups and others who jointly seek to manage natural resources in the watershed effectively. Having both evidence and a solid network has helped to empower the community so they can effectively take part in forest decision-making that affects their way of life, leading to tangible benefits for all community members.





TARGET 5.B

# THE USE OF ENABLING TECHNOLOGY, IN PARTICULAR ICTS, TO PROMOTE THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

## Indigenous communities in Thailand conduct community forest inventory and prove they are sustaining forests



Pangyang village in mountainous Nan Province, Thailand, has been home to about 300 indigenous people for hundreds of years. The area was partly designated Doi Phu Kha national park, and as a result of government policy, the inhabitants were asked to move despite the fact that the area was inhabited before the national park was declared.

To address this issue, RECOFTC and partners met with local community members to assess the situation. As a result of the meeting, the villagers asked for support to gather data on their land use and forest management as a means of proving both their land tenure as well as showing that their community can sustainably manage forests and contribute toward reaching the government goal of increasing forest land cover by 40%.

Together with the NGO Raks Thai and GiSNorth, an organization with GIS technical expertise, RECOFTC worked with community members, particularly women’s groups, to develop capacities to systematically collect land-use zoning data.

RECOFTC trained community members on how to undertake a basic forest inventory, meeting state requirements, with simple tools such as GPS in order to mark the communities’ land boundaries. The decision over its zoning demarcation, particularly

for the family-designated forests, took into consideration the needs, priorities, and interests of local ethnic minority women in the village in access to forest-land and resources for household consumption and livelihoods. Eventually, the community was able to develop an overall land use map through systematic and reliable data gathering processes. The data was reviewed and discussed at the community meeting where women and men were present. Their GIS maps showed how the community had designated areas as agricultural zones, living zones, and forest conservation zones, proving that the community has been sustainably managing and protecting the forest areas using customary practices. The information has become a strong tool for the community to negotiate with national park officers and government agencies, which is a big step toward securing women’s access to land and resources.

With this evidence, villagers are now able to substantiate their land ownership as well as prove that their land can help meet forest conservation targets set by the government – and they have not had to move from their land. This has also raised awareness among ethnic women and men about the value of technology as a tool of empowerment.





TARGET 5.C

# SOUND POLICIES AND LEGISLATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT

## Smallholders in Thailand take part in forest governance to legally trade timber and enhance their incomes



In Thailand, the negotiation process for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreements (FLEGT VPA) is currently underway. Initially, discussions in Thailand were mainly conducted between the government and the private sector. However, civil society and smallholder farmers are now actively taking part. Their participation in the negotiations is essential to achieving the aim of reducing illegal logging in Thailand through strengthening sustainable and legal forest management, improving governance and promoting trade in legally produced timber.

Fostering civil society engagement in the VPA process is the aim of a RECOFTC project that is mobilizing civil society stakeholders for sustainable and equitable forest management in FLEGT. The project intends to achieve this through three interventions: capacity development and learning; information and knowledge generation; and network building.

Initially, RECOFTC consulted with several civil society and smallholder groups to identify the key concerns of smallholders in accessing the legal timber process. RECOFTC then convened several learning forums, resulting in the establishment of a Thai CSO FLEGT network that has now been recognized

by government and other parties. The network's working group committee serves as a voice for members' concerns and is now able to negotiate effectively and efficiently with other stakeholders in the FLEGT VPA process.

Core members of the CSO FLEGT network are women leaders from private forest plantation cooperatives and small scale farmers. The women leaders are voicing their specific agenda and interests. Previously, gender perspectives were completely absent from the discussions, despite the fact that rural women play significant roles in forest management and are impacted by the discussions. Network representatives have also been appointed to sit in the FLEGT VPA ad-hoc working group and in sub-committees. Most importantly, the issues and concerns of smallholders are being considered in developing Thailand's timber legality definition. This definition makes identifying legal timber clearer. Thus, timber and timber products that comply with the laws cited in the legality definition are considered legal under the terms of the VPA.

RECOFTC is currently a facilitator of the Thai CSOs FLEGT network, and continues to develop capacities of network members to deepen understanding on FLEGT and forest-related laws and policies.

# PARTICIPATORY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

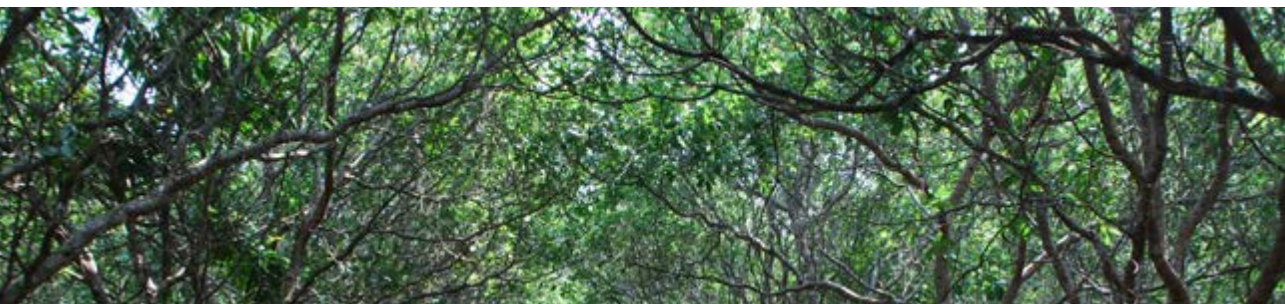
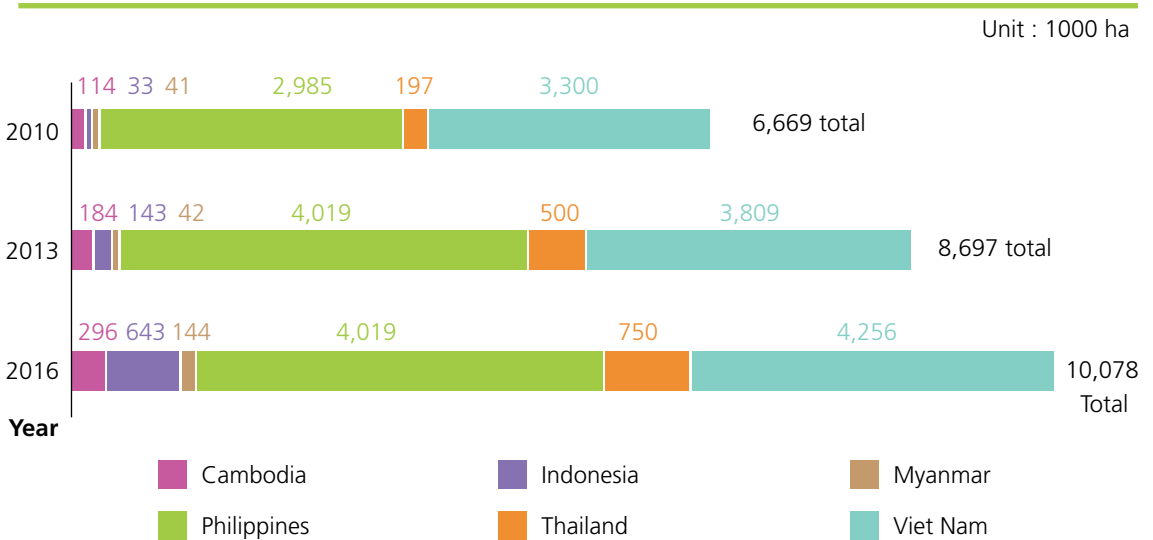
During 2015-16, RECOFTC organized 197 capacity development events with almost 5500 participants, of which 30% were female. RECOFTC also supported development of more than 20 civil society networks in focal countries; and organized 64 awareness raising events and 45 advocacy events. RECOFTC actively contributed to 58 events that aimed to improve the policies and practices of various government and civil society organizations in the region.

RECOFTC also launched its online progress-tracking system, and enhanced internal capacities to systematically collect and analyze data from its programmatic work. Furthermore, RECOFTC supported partners in developing their own PM&E systems to support delivery of their mandate.

During 2015-16, RECOFTC facilitated trainings in Myanmar to develop capacities for officials from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MoNREC) in developing systems for CF information collection assessment, and to develop monitoring and evaluation capacities of STAFA officials in China. In addition, RECOFTC developed a pilot participatory monitoring and evaluation system with community groups in Cambodia and Myanmar to promote citizen's monitoring in forestry.

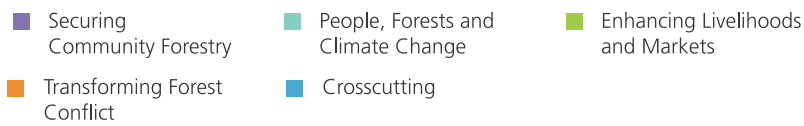
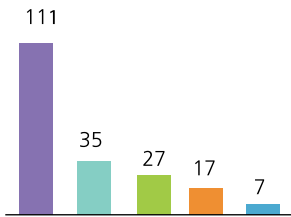
Overall, between 2010 and 2016, the total CF area in six ASEAN countries increased by 55% (3588 ha), with Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand making the most significant progress in positively contributing to the increase.

**Total CF area 2010, 2013, and 2016 in six ASEAN countries:**

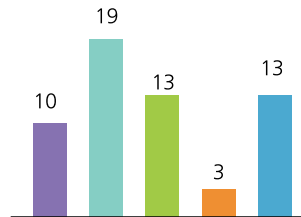




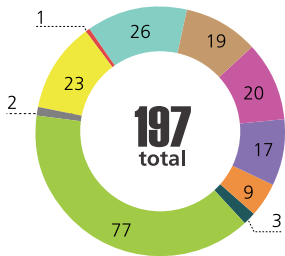
### Capacity development events by thematic area



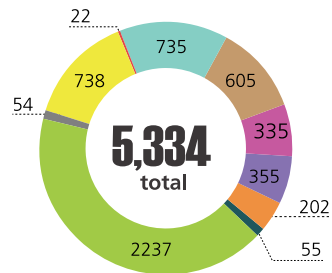
### Knowledge products produced



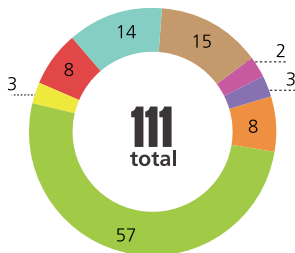
### Capacity development events by country



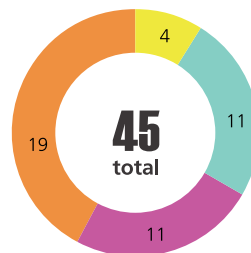
### Capacity development participants by country



### Awareness-raising events by country



### Advocacy events by country



# PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING AND ACTION FOR COMMUNITY FORESTRY THROUGH COMMUNICATION

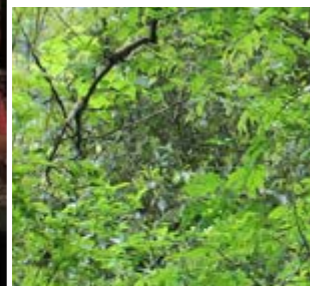
RECOFTC's knowledge-sharing platforms grew significantly in 2015-16 with the launch of websites and social media channels in focal country languages (Khmer, Lao, Myanmar-language, Thai, Vietnamese). Together with RECOFTC's English-language website and social media channels, RECOFTC's reach grew to more than 15,000 regular followers, allowing for quick dissemination of messages and knowledge to target audiences in their own languages. RECOFTC also reached out to forest stakeholders through publications and videos, with 68 new publications produced, 19 in focal country languages.

RECOFTC hosted several major regional events, including co-leading the People and Forests stream at Asia-Pacific Forestry Week, participated in by more than 1300 representatives of government, UN, NGOs and other forestry organizations. A highlight of the event was a session exploring "What is 'gender-inclusive communication' and how can it help empower women?", organized by

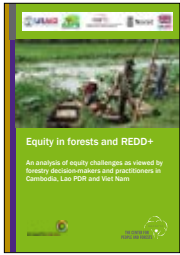
RECOFTC and partners. The event was instrumental in bringing the voices of women community forestry leaders to the regional stage.

RECOFTC's People & Forests Fair, held in Bangkok, raised awareness among young urban audiences that forests are about local people. The event garnered over 100 reports in Thai media and drew in more than 200 people. RECOFTC also reached out to youth in the annual International Day of Forests student debate on forests and water. Overall, RECOFTC organized or participated in more than 110 national and international awareness-raising and advocacy events.

RECOFTC continued to contribute toward developing communication capacities of forestry leaders and communicators through trainings and workshops on strategic communication, along with facilitating the Asia-Pacific Forest Communicators Network (APFCN).



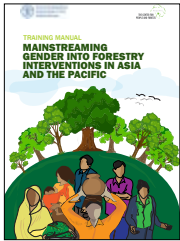
# Highlight publications



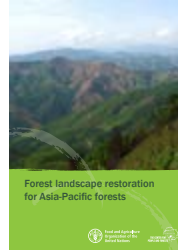
**Equity in forests and REDD+:** An analysis of equity challenges as viewed by forestry decision-makers and practitioners in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam



**The role of community forestry in climate change adaptation in the ASEAN region**



**Mainstreaming gender into forestry interventions in Asia and the Pacific:** Training Manual



**Forest landscape restoration for Asia-Pacific forests**



**Forests and climate change after Paris:** An Asia-Pacific perspective - Implications of the UNFCCC COP 21 on forest policy and practice



**Concerns and aspirations of grassroots stakeholders for REDD+**



**Appropriate small-scale forest harvesting technologies:** a guidebook for Southeast Asia



**Sustainable forest management for community livelihood**



# FINANCIAL REPORT 2015 - 2016

Revenue	Budget (USD)	Actual (USD)
<b>Grant</b>	<b>1,307,895</b>	<b>1,246,766</b>
Core Fund & RECOFTC Fund		1,206,215
Royal Thai Government		40,551
<b>Internal Income</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>	<b>2,117,544</b>
Contribution from projects		1,646,986
Consultancies, Workshop, Seminar, Study Tour		247,913
Dorm and facilities		200,234
Other income (Others & Interest)		22,411
<b>Total 2016 Incoming Funds</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>	<b>2,117,544</b>
<b>Grant - Project</b>	<b>6,644,253</b>	<b>4,829,002</b>
<b>Total Fund Available</b>	<b>9,452,148</b>	<b>8,193,312</b>

Expenditure	Budget (USD)	Actual (USD)
<b>Program</b>		
Capacity Development and Technical Services	879,217	739,917
Strategic Communication	361,054	322,084
Program Coordination, and Operations	1,325,805	1,200,970
<b>Governance</b>		
Executive Office & Monitoring & Evaluation	423,977	398,007
<b>Support</b>		
Corporate Services	755,806	712,243
Central Operating Expenses	496,500	218,864
Capital Expenses - Core Fund	8,000	3,309
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>4,250,359</b>	<b>3,595,394</b>
Project Expenditure		5,599,631
Capital Expense - Project	7,000	30,102
Depreciation		235,780
<b>Grand Total Expenditure</b>		<b>9,460,907</b>
Excess of Expenditure over Income		(1,267,595)
Add Purchase of Fixed Assets (To reconcile with 2016 Audit Report)		33,411
<b>Excess of Expenditure over Income (as per 2016 Audit Report)</b>		<b>(1,234,184)</b>

\*\*\* Remark: This report derives from the calculation of the audited financial information which is in THB with the T/T exchange rate at the closing date as of 30 September 2016.



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2015 - 2016



### **Dr. Doris Capistrano (Chair)**

Senior Advisor  
ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (AFSCC)  
Indonesia

### **Dr. Nguyen Nghia Bien**

Director  
Forest Inventory and Planning Institute (FIPI)  
Vietnam

### **Mr. Patrick Durst**

Senior Forestry Officer  
FAO- Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific  
Bangkok

### **Dr. Ir. Tachrir Fathoni**

Director General  
Directorate General of Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems  
Indonesia

### **Mr. Christer Holtsberg**

Partner  
Nordic Consulting Group (NGC) - Sweden  
Sweden

### **Mr. Srey Marona**

Executive Director  
The Learning Institute: People and Natural Resource  
Cambodia

### **Dr. Bimala Rai Paudyal**

Former Member, National Planning Commission  
Head, Research Division  
South Asia School of Rural Reconstruction  
Nepal

### **Ms. Sharmini Ratwatte**

Trustee  
Federation of Environmental Organisations  
Sri Lanka

### **Mr. Boonchob Suthamanuswong**

Chief of Inspector General  
Office of the Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment  
Thailand

### **Mr. Thongphath Vongmany**

Director General  
Department of Forestry  
Lao PDR

### **Dr. Chongrak Wachrinrat**

Dean, Faculty of Forestry  
Kasetsart University  
Thailand

### **Dr. Chen Xiaoqian**

Associate Professor  
School of Economics and Management  
Beijing Forestry University  
China

### **Non-voting Member**

### **Dr. Tint Lwin Thuang**

Executive Director, RECOFTC  
Thailand

## DONORS AND PARTNERS 2015 - 2016



### **Core donors**

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad)  
Royal Thai Government  
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)  
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

### **Project donors**

Asian Development Bank (ADB)  
Bank Information Center (BIC)  
Department for International Development (DFID)  
European Commission (EC)  
Energy and Environment Partnership (EEP) Mekong  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)  
Forest Trends  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland  
Multi Stakeholder Forestry Program (MSFP), Nepal  
Royal Norwegian Embassy Bangkok  
Royal Norwegian Embassy Yangon  
Samoa Agro-forestry and Tree Farming Programme (SATFP)  
United Nations Development Program (UNDP)  
United Nations Development Program Global Environment Facility (UNDP-GEF)  
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

### **Regional partners**

AECOM  
ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity  
ASEAN-Korea Forest Cooperation (AFoCo)  
ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN)  
Asia-Pacific Forestry Communications Network  
Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet)  
ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN)  
Bank Information Center (BIC)  
Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)  
European Forest Institute (EFI)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)  
Forest Peoples Programme (FPP)  
Global Alliance of Community Forestry (GACF)  
The World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)  
International Alert  
Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)  
International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)  
International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO)  
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)  
Istituto Oikos  
Kasetsart University (KU)  
Mekong Region Land Governance (MRLG) program  
Non-Timber Forest Products Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP)  
Office of the Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education, Thailand  
Princeton in Asia (PiA)  
Responsible Asia Forestry and Trade (RAFT)  
Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI)  
Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA)  
Stora Enso  
The Nature Conservancy (TNC)  
The Forest Trust (TFT)  
TRAFFIC  
Tropical Forest Foundation (TFF)  
United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD)  
United Nations Development Program (UNDP)  
University of East Anglia  
Village Focus International (VFI)  
Wageningen University  
Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)  
World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)  
Winrock International  
Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture & Natural Resource Management (WOCAN)



