





## Strengthening Governance

From the perspective of poverty and livelihoods, the merits of local governance and community management of forests are subject to debate. Discussions centre on how local and indigenous authorities and traditional knowledge can benefit livelihoods and improve ecosystem functions. TBI contributes relevant and practical information to this debate and to the practice of local and decentralized forest governance. The aim is to inform the development of

effective local and decentralized forest management arrangements (including ownership and tenure), address weaknesses in current governance, and improve the ways in which local and/or community interests are addressed in government, non-government and corporate policies that relate to the management of landscapes and natural resources.



## Local perspectives on illegal mining in the Colombian Amazon

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The Colombian Amazon has been through various mining booms since the 1980s. In the last five years illegal gold mining has increased, especially in the Caquetá and Putumayo river areas. This has had negative environmental, cultural, social and economic impacts. Indigenous communities participate in mining activities in multiple ways: extracting gold directly, using rafts and dredges that they own; working as employees on the rafts of miners who have recently migrated to the region; or providing agricultural products, fish and bush meat.

Given the illegal nature of the mining activity in the Amazon and its link to armed and illegal actors, it is difficult to carry out research on its dynamics and impacts. For this reason a project was developed to document the impacts of mining from a local perspective. Several communities — including indigenous people — received support so that they could document their experiences working in mining and their impressions of the effects of these activities.

The project was developed under an agreement of cooperation between TBI Colombia and the Initiative for the Conservation in the Andean Amazon (ICAA)-USAID. The aim was to record multiple views from indigenous people of various ages, from young to old, and from shamans and knowledge holders on the cultural implications and shamanistic understandings of gold extraction. In addition, the project supported a group of women to document their insights about the implications of the activities from a gender perspective.

As an outcome of this work written testimonies from 20 people were collected. These describe

in detail the local aspects of mining activity, and address the environmental, social, cultural and economic impacts. A study on the legal and institutional frameworks for this activity was also carried out, which analyzed the public policies for mining in the Amazon and the government's monitoring mechanisms.

Based on this information an event was organized in Bogotá that brought together indigenous communities and public institutions. Various government entities were invited, including the Ministries of environment, the interior and culture, as well as the national mining authority, academics and NGOs. They created an open dialogue about mining, with the goal of defining the immediate actions needed and the public policies necessary to address and control the impacts of illegal mining.



## Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue in Ghana formally institutionalized

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Stakeholder consultation in decision making in the forestry sector is an important part of sustainable forest management. In Ghana, the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (MSD) was the main strategy used by the chainsaw milling project to build consensus on options—in both policy and practice—for supplying legal lumber to the domestic market.

The MSD is an interactive and learning approach that involves all types of stakeholders within the forestry sector. It has proved to be an effective method of for decision making in the face of diverse views and competing interests and expectations. Through the well-managed MSD, the project was able to bridge the differences between competing actors (chainsaw operators and forest managers) within the domestic timber value chain. Two major outcomes from the discussions were its contributions to a policy for supplying legal timber to the domestic market, and to a public procurement policy on wood and wood products. The artisanal milling concept was developed and piloted through the MSD.

Since the MSD was established in September 2009, the MSD Steering Committee has worked to promote favourable conditions for a multiple-stakeholder approach to policy-making in Ghana. To ensure that the MSD is sustainable, it has now been institutionalized within the National Forest Forum-Ghana. This body has the legitimacy and recognition to engage all stakeholders in forestry related dialogue, from formulation and planning to implementation.

The first meeting of the institutionalized platform was held in Kumasi on 16 July 2015. It was attended by more than 110 participants from about twenty stakeholder groups across the country. Among them were Forestry Commission staff, chainsaw operators, woodworkers and wood traders, academics and research institutions, just to mention a few. The stakeholders felt positive about the harmonization, and believe that through this approach they can contribute to forestry sector discussions and reforms.

## Workshop: Community forestry in Indonesia

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Date: 22–23 October 2015

Place: Bogor, Indonesia

By: Tropenbos International Indonesia in collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Directorate General of Social Forestry and Environment Partnership, Ministry of Environment and Forestry

In 2015 Indonesia's president Joko Widodo announced that 12.7 million ha of state forest areas would be distributed to indigenous people and local communities under a community forestry programme. In addition, 9 million ha of agricultural land (Land Allocated for Agrarian Reform) would be distributed. Achieving these targets will certainly not be an easy task. The country has complex problems regarding land tenure and the government has limited capacity to provide certainty regarding state forest areas and to facilitate conflict resolution at the grassroots level.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) had the opportunity to share their thoughts and concerns about these issues during the workshop "Identifying problems and formulating strategies for a community forestry programme in Indonesia and its implications for the roles of CSOs."

Workshop participants discussed the roles and responsibilities of CSOs in terms of communities. CSOs are intended to empower the community to be the target beneficiary of a community forestry programme, rather than serving only as facilitators for land-use permits. By being empowered, the community members will be better able to manage their land and improve their quality of life. CSOs can also make a very important contribution to strengthening capacity and helping the community build innovative forest-based livelihoods.

During the workshop, CSOs identified their strengths and weaknesses and in so doing became

aware of their limitations. For instance, although CSOs have a strong network at the national and regional level, which allows information to flow without bureaucratic hurdles or boundaries, they are also susceptible to political interference and in most cases are highly driven by the funding available. Some CSOs have good databases in the field, but they often have limited capacity to manage large amounts of funding or be accountable through an auditing process.

All the workshop participants recommended that CSOs work hand in hand with other parties in order to be successful. The sustainability of the community forestry programme over the long term requires funding from donor agencies as well as private-sector commitment to corporate social responsibility; government support through strong regulations; and a spirit of togetherness ("gotong-royong").

Participants concluded that the contribution of CSOs to community forestry programmes should not be over-estimated. A CSO should be more strategic than practical. It should be the think-tank, the lobbyist, the advocator, and the facilitator between central and regional government. The greater its influence and the greater its needs, the more able it is to fight for certain policies, or to assist in developing or promoting best practices and technical assistance in community forestry programmes.





## Manual: Sustainable forest management for village development

About one-fifth of the people in Suriname live close to forests and they depend on the goods and services provided by these forests for their livelihoods. It is impor-

tant that forests are well managed, so that they can continue to provide resources in the future. Sustainable management of the forest — which can be achieved through community forest management plans — is needed.

A forest management plan is usually based on three components: 1) an assessment of the current situation; 2) the desired situation (target); and 3) the necessary steps to achieve the target. In Suriname, the Ministry of Regional Development can support communities as they establish such a plan. In order to strengthen the capacity of ministry personnel and members of the communities,

TBI Suriname and the Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Science conducted tailor-made training on using participatory methods to formulate forest management plans.

The training content and methods have been compiled in this manual, which can serve as training and reference material for communities. Readers are instructed in how to perform an analysis of the existing situation, how to determine the target situation, and how to design the steps needed to achieve the target. All activities are participatory and can be executed by a project team and a group of villagers.

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