How RECOFTC and community forestry contribute to the Global Goals

Reflections on 2020/2021
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Foreword

RECOFTC's work revolves around helping countries and communities achieve the Global Goals on poverty, hunger, the environment, climate change, gender equality and decent work. The Global Goals are also known as the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs.

Our entry point to sustainable development and climate change solutions is community forestry. We work at the forefront of modern global development in the Asia-Pacific region, where some of the world's most diverse and unique landscapes are at risk of destruction. We build the capacity of communities and transform conflict into collaboration.

This report describes the links between RECOFTC's fiscal year 2020/2021 work and the Global Goals. It shows how we help to achieve a world where people live equitably and sustainably in and beside healthy, resilient forests, and ultimately a planet fit for the next generations.

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How RECOFTC and community forestry contribute to the Global Goals
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. 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 equality.

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 in seven countries of the region and 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.

With the overarching aim of helping to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, 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 work together to promote sustainable development across the Asia-Pacific region and are based on secure rights and equitable participation. These goals put people at the centre of development to create the necessary conditions for communities to transform their landscapes and for countries to achieve their part of the Global Goals:

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 tracks its work and progress in relation to the Global Goals with two data collection methods per fiscal year, which is what this report reflects. The Output Reporting Tool focuses on quantitative data, collected twice a year from all seven country programs and the regional teams. The Outcome Harvesting Tool focuses on qualitative data, collected once a year from RECOFTC’s seven focal countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam.

In fiscal year 2020/2021 (FY2020/2021), RECOFTC staff invested almost three million hours to help communities strengthen their community forestry and tenure rights. Together, they contributed to the growth of community forest areas, which is the foundation for achieving many of the Global Goals and the Paris Agreement. 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 FY2020/2021 most closely aligned with the following seven goals.
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, to contribute towards reversing degradation and halting biodiversity loss and to produce products that feed and support urban populations. Forest communities build social safety nets for us all while mitigating climate change and other disasters.

Through training, research and technical assistance in applying for tenure rights, RECOFTC helps Indigenous Peoples and local communities secure their community forest rights and to more sustainably and equitably manage and benefit from them.

Our work in FY2020/2021 most closely aligned with 11 of the Goal’s 12 targets:

15.1: Conserve and restore terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems
15.2: End deforestation and restore degraded forests
15.3: End desertification and restore degraded land
15.4: Ensure conservation of mountain ecosystems
15.5: Protect biodiversity and natural habitats
15.6: Protect access to genetic resources and fair sharing of the benefits
15.7: Eliminate poaching and trafficking of protected species
15.8: Prevent invasive alien species on land and in water ecosystems
15.9: Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity in governmental planning
15.a: Increase financial resources to conserve and sustainably use ecosystem and biodiversity
15.b: Finance and incentivize sustainable forest management

In FY2020/2021, RECOFTC’s work helped 472 communities gain formal approval of their community forest, representing 60,906 households. A total of 451,302 hectares of community forest were under direct RECOFTC support. We worked with 184 partners in our seven country programs to pursue achievement of our goals, hand in hand with the Global Goals. We conducted three research studies that contributed to sustainable natural resources management. Through our work in FY2020/2021, Cambodia adopted inclusive and gender-responsive policies to promote landscape management by local people.
Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy

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

Forest conservation, a vital component to fighting climate change, is impossible without people gaining economic benefits from forests. Through training, we support community forest enterprises, which is a powerful solution to safeguard forests and empower the communities that depend on them. RECOFTC also works with communities to plant and look after trees that will help restore degraded forests and increase carbon storage.

In FY2020/2021, this work towards reducing carbon dioxide and contributing to the reduction of the global temperature most closely aligned with all five targets of Goal 13:

- 13.1: Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related disasters
- 13.2: Integrate climate change measures into policy and planning
- 13.3: Build knowledge and capacity to meet climate change
- 13.a: Implement the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
- 13.b: Promote mechanisms to raise capacity for planning and management

RECOFTC supported community forest user groups in the Asia-Pacific region to build in climate change responses in their community forestry management plans. Of the 472 approved community forests that RECOFTC worked directly with during FY2020/2021, 453 community forestry user groups included climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions into their community forestry management plans. These 453 community forest user groups continue to manage a total of 268,631 hectares of forest with strategies that can respond to climate change threats in their communities and ultimately contribute to countries in the region meeting global sustainability and climate change goals. In FY2020/2021 and in the spirit of public awareness-raising, RECOFTC published 172 communication and knowledge products about community forestry and climate change on its website and in other public forums.

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Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

This Goal is based on the belief that 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 for those furthest behind first. This fifth Goal asks that women and girls be given equal rights and opportunities to 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 program countries who 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 FY2020/2021 aligned most closely with at least four of the Goal’s nine targets:

**Target**
- 5.1: End discrimination against women and girls
- 5.5: Ensure full participation in leadership and decision-making
- 5.a: Equal rights to economic resources, property ownership and financial services
- 5.c: Adopt and strengthen policies and enforceable legislation for gender equality

In FY2020/2021, approximately 25 percent of the community forestry management committees in RECOFTC’s program areas were women. Those community forestry management committees also include people with disabilities and Indigenous Peoples.
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 to conflict over the management of the resources under their stewardship.

RECOFTC’s programs seek to help communities secure their rights to the forests where they live, which encompasses recognition of their stewardship over the extraction of the resources for the purposes of conservation and to avoid conflicts. This includes strengthening grass-roots 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 FY2020/2021 with four of the Goal’s 12 targets:

- 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions
- 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive and representative decision-making
- 16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms
- 16.b: Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies

In FY2020/2021, a total of 3,040 members of community forest user groups participated in policy dialogues or other events through which they could 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 political processes.

Additionally in FY2020/2021, around 9,141 community members participated in social inclusion and gender equity-related events organized by RECOFTC and partners. These programs aimed to reduce discrimination, marginalization and the exclusion of people living in fragile contexts in RECOFTC’s seven focal countries.
Sustained and inclusive economic growth must drive the world's progress, create decent jobs for all and improve living standards. RECOFTC's programs in typically remote areas strive to change local communities' quality of life for the better by introducing them to 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 FY2020/2021 most closely aligned with six of the 12 targets of Goal 8:

- 8.1: Sustainable economic growth
- 8.2: Diversify, innovate and upgrade for economic productivity
- 8.3: Promote policies to support job creation and growing enterprises
- 8.4: Improve resource efficiency in consumption and production
- 8.6: Promote youth employment, education and training
- 8.a: Increase aid for trade support

In FY2020/2021, RECOFTC supported 66 individual community-based enterprises that involved 40 women and 50 men and 35 group enterprises. Of the 22 community business partnership agreements developed by local entrepreneurs and investors, 13 were formal and nine were informal. They covered partnerships for such enterprises as teak wood production and processing and non-timber forest products.
While the Goal primarily speaks to quality primary, secondary and tertiary education and literacy, 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 entrepreneurial opportunities to strengthen livelihoods. A free online e-course launched in 2020 introduces community forestry as a pathway to solving the world’s greatest social and environmental challenges. These directions most closely aligned in FY2020/2021 with three of the Goal’s 10 targets while they also relate to several other of the 17 goals:

- **Target 4.3**: Ensure equal access to affordable technical, vocational and higher education
- **Target 4.4**: Increase the number of people with relevant skills for financial success
- **Target 4.7**: Provide education for sustainable development and global citizenship

In FY2020/2021, RECOFTC trained 2,229 women and men on community forestry and sustainable development topics related to tenure security, climate change, social inclusion and more. And 2,151 women and men accessed RECOFTC’s e-learning course Community Forestry 101. This e-course centres on community-led forest management for sustainable development and inclusive climate change solutions.
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Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

This Goal reflects that worldwide consumption and production are driving forces of the global economy and that it 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 manage their forests in FY2020/2021, RECOFTC most closely aligned with at least five of the Goal’s 11 targets:

- **12.1**: Implement the 10-year sustainable consumption and production framework
- **12.2**: Sustainable management and use of natural resources
- **12.6**: Encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices and sustainability reporting
- **12.7**: Promote sustainable public procurement practices
- **12.8**: Promote universal understanding of sustainable lifestyles

In FY2020/2021, RECOFTC trained 2,059 women and men in the sustainable and efficient use of natural resources. Of them, 12 also were 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 30 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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Our sponsors

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