



RECOFTC

Community forestry models in Asia–Pacific

# Partnership forests in Nepal

Infosheet

In Nepal, there are five types of community forestry models: buffer zone community forests, community-based conservation areas, community forests, partnership forests and pro-poor leasehold forests. In partnership forest management, local communities, the local government and the provincial government, as represented by the Division Forest Office, jointly manage a forest area. This model is also called “collaborative forest”. Representatives of the stakeholder groups form a partnership forest management group, with a community representative as the president. The model’s legal basis is laid out in Forest Act, 2019 and Forest Rules, 2022.

# Key requirements

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## Who is eligible?

Groups of households who are permanent residents of a municipality and have been verified by the local government and the Division Forest Office are eligible to be included in a partnership forest.

## Allocation process

1. Representatives of forest users, the local government and the Division Forest Office form a partnership forest management group.
2. Members of the partnership forest management group form a partnership forest management committee.
3. The partnership forest management committee prepares a partnership forest management plan for the group to approve in its general assembly.
4. The management plan is sent to the Provincial Forest Directorate for approval, along with the District Forest Sector Coordination Committee's recommendation.

# Main elements

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## Duration of tenure

- Tenure is indefinite because it is not specified, but a valid forest management plan is needed to harvest forest products.



## Type and condition of forest

- Partnership forests can be established in any government-managed forest outside of protected areas.
- The area is recommended by the Division Forest Officer, as agreed by the Division Forest Office, the local government and forest users.



## Type and duration of management plan

- The partnership forest management plan is for up to 10 years.



## Internal governance

- Each users' group is regulated according to its own constitution, which includes the group's duties, functions and powers.
- The decision-making body within the partnership forest management committee has the following members: chairperson, deputy chairperson, general members and an assistant forest officer

recommended by the Division Forest Officer.

- The implementation body has a chairperson, general members and an assistant forest officer recommended by the Sub-division Forest Office.
- The maximum tenure for each position is five years. Before a person's tenure ends, the users' group chooses a replacement and hands over the duties and responsibilities. If the group does not choose new members by the completion of its tenure, the Division Forest Office acts as the governing body and hands over the responsibility to new members within three months.
- The users' group also sets up a bank account to implement partnership forestry. Use of the funds in the bank account requires the signatures of both the chairperson and a member of the users' group chosen by its committee. They use the funds only to run programs agreed by the Division Forest Office.
- The activities and implementation expenses of the governing bodies (implementation unit and management unit) are to be paid with the funds of the partnership forest users' group.

- The users' group should keep track of its finances and assets in an audit report and provide the report to the local government agencies.
- An annual audit of income and expenditure is done according to the prevailing laws.



### Gender and social inclusion

- Women, ethnic groups and Dalits must be represented in each of the bodies.
- The users' group must include at least seven members from disadvantaged groups, including two women and, if available, one member each from Dalit, indigenous and Madhesi communities.
- The partnership forest management committee must include up to 13 members from disadvantaged groups, including at least three women from the general assembly of the users' group and, if available, one member each from Dalit, indigenous and Madhesi communities.
- For the daily operational and forest management plan implementation, a committee is formed that should have four general members, including at least two women.



### Community-based enterprises

- The partnership forest management committee is required to implement income-generating activities to support the livelihoods of poor households, but there is no provision for community-based enterprises within collaborative forest management.



### Benefit-sharing mechanism

- The users' group should prioritize the internal consumption of forest products from the partnership forest and can distribute any remaining products outside the group.
- The partnership forest users' group must spend at least 25 percent of its earnings from the sale and distribution of forest products on the development, protection and management of the forest. The users' group should spend at least 25 percent

of the remaining amount on poverty alleviation, women's empowerment and entrepreneurship development activities, in coordination with the local government.



### External support

- The Division Forest Office provides technical and other cooperation that users' groups need to prepare their management plan.
- To implement partnership forestry, the Department of Forest and the users' groups can receive assistance from national and international government and non-government agencies.



### Conflict-resolution mechanism

- Conflict within a users' group is to be resolved internally in the group's general assembly. Conflicts between adjacent villages are addressed through dialogue between the conflicting parties. Local authority heads and village leaders can help to resolve disputes.
- If a users' group fails to follow its management plan, significantly harms the environment or fails to comply with other requirements, the Provincial Forest Directorate may cancel the group's registration and take back the partnership forest for government management. The users' group has up to 15 days to clarify the situation in writing.



## Rights and responsibilities of community members

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### Members have rights to:

- harvest and use timber and non-timber forest products from the forest, in accordance with the management plan and by paying the royalty set by the government—each forest users' group has a right to 70 percent of the wood produced from the forest and all the herbs and other non-timber forest products. The Division Forest Officer sells the remaining 30 percent of the wood by auction, following section 25 of the Forest Guidelines, 2022.
- buy wood for emergency relief, cremation and religious purposes and to make agricultural implements, by paying taxes and royalties to the government.

### Members must:

- participate in forest conservation, development and management.
- implement the collaborative forest management plan, along with the Division Forest Office and local government.

- spend at least 25 percent of the annual income from the sale of forest products in the development, conservation or management of their forest and at least half of the remaining income on poverty alleviation, women's empowerment or enterprise development.
- participate in public hearings and audits.

### Members cannot:

- transfer rights over the forest to other parties.
- clear forest areas for agriculture purposes.
- build huts or houses, except those needed for security reasons and with the approval of the District Forest Officer.
- take any action that can cause soil erosion.
- capture or kill wildlife in contravention of the law.
- extract or transport soil, rocks, sand and so on.

## Links with climate change policies and targets

- There is no legal requirement for leasehold forest users' groups to integrate climate vulnerability, adaptation or mitigation activities into their workplan.
- Nepal's National Adaptation Programme of Action 2010 recognizes community-based forest users' groups as stakeholders managing community adaptation funds and identifying and implementing adaptation programs at the community level. Its priority actions include supporting the implementation of adaptation priorities of the forest users' groups.
- The National Climate Change Policy 2019 recognizes the past contributions of community forestry to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It aims to mobilize community organizations to manage climate-induced disasters and enhance the capacity of these organizations to mainstream climate resilience into development programs. However, the policy does not refer to the community forestry program specifically.
- Nepal's National Adaptation Plan 2021–2050 notes that forests under community-based management made up 42.7 percent of the forest areas in 2019, which indicates that these groups have an important role in mainstreaming climate adaptation into forest management plans.
- Nepal's second Nationally Determined Contribution (2020) under the Paris Agreement on climate change states, under the mitigation component, that forests with community-based management will comprise at least 60 percent of forest area by 2030 and that women will make up 50 percent of management committees, along with proportional representation of Dalits and Indigenous Peoples in key posts.

## Read more

- RECOFTC, *Special Report: How community forests boosted pandemic resilience across Asia-Pacific*, [www.recoftc.org/special-report/community-forestry-boosted-pandemic-resilience](http://www.recoftc.org/special-report/community-forestry-boosted-pandemic-resilience)
- Find out more about RECOFTC's work in Nepal at [www.recoftc.org/nepal](http://www.recoftc.org/nepal)



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


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