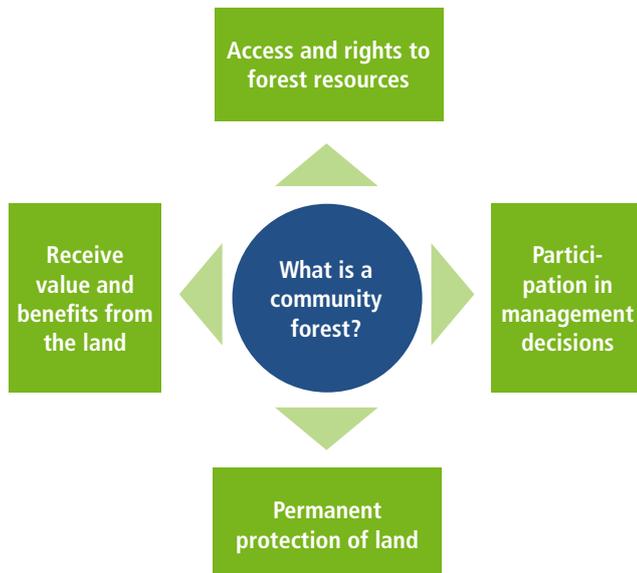


# COMMUNITY FORESTRY

## CHALLENGES

Community forestry was initially defined by the FAO as, "any situation which intimately involves local people in a forestry activity". Community forestry gives the local people the chance to be participatory involved in forest management and land use decisions.

Depending on the needs of the communities, the specific forest management objectives can be multiple and vary from environmental to financial or subsistence-based to social, spiritual and cultural ones. But in general there are four primary functions or characteristics of community forests:



Around 450 million local people rely to some degree on forests for their livelihoods in the Asia-Pacific region. But often local people are not involved in forest management decisions and also don't benefit from it which results in ongoing forest decline and rural poverty.

Promoting natural forest ecosystems' integrity and its biodiversity values while at the same time ensuring sustainable forest product utilisation for the livelihood development of forest dependent people will require major shifts in the national policy frame, market mechanisms and finally awareness of engaged forest managers. Facilitating this process is seen as one of the biggest challenges for the forest sector while at the same time opens up valuable opportunities to reduce the burden for the administrative on forest management and protection by sharing such responsibilities with traditional communities.

## GFA CONCEPTS AND SERVICES

The GFA Consulting Group has supported the implementation of more than 200 forest related projects and studies worldwide in the last 30 years. In most of these projects, the participatory involvement of the local communities played an important role and GFA experts have contributed to secure long-term rights of local people to use and to manage the forests in a sustainable manner. GFA offers an extensive knowledge in all community forestry related fields like forest policy, good governance, institutional development, forest certification and traceability of timber, reforestation, forest monitoring and sustainable forest management techniques.

In the Asia-Pacific region GFA has elaborated concepts for community forestry since 1990/1993 starting with the Social Forestry Development Projects (SFDP-GTZ) in Indonesia and Vietnam respectively. Since then we have continuously improved and applied the concept in GIZ, KfW, ADB, and national Tropical Forest Trust funded projects and thereby supporting to shape the development of national community forestry concepts in various countries.

The GFA implementation strategies are based on combining international best practice with local knowledge and methods, field experience with scientific knowledge, and extensive knowledge of financial and institutional requirements to ensure services that meet customers' demands.

Several challenges need to be addressed in order to establish a self-sustaining community forestry management program. Our range of services includes the handling of all these challenges such as:

- securing land ownership and forest stewardship;
- strengthen organizational capacities;
- ensuring free, prior and informed participation of local population (both, men and women) into project activities;
- provide the technical knowledge to manage forest resources legally and sustainably;
- develop legal forest and land use management plans;
- establish forest patrolling to identify illegal logging and fire control;
- establish market access;
- establish the infrastructure for forest management such as roads and logging equipment;
- develop managerial and marketing skills, promote forest-based enterprises;
- securing long-term economic returns and improvement of rural livelihoods;
- upscaling of innovations and lessons learned into national programs.