

GENDER TOOLKIT

# FOREST TENURE PATHWAYS TO GENDER EQUALITY

STEPS FOR ACHIEVING ACCELERATED CHANGE

TRAINING HANDBOOK

GENDER ACCELERATORS:  
WOMEN AND MEN LEADING THE WAY  
ON LOCAL FOREST TENURE REFORM

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EDITORS

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AMPB	Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests ( <i>Alianza Mesoamericana de Pueblos y Bosques</i> )
COICA	Coordinating Body for the Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin
CSO	civil society organization
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal
FLR	forest landscape restoration
NGO	non-governmental organization
ONAMIAP	National Organization of Indigenous, Andean, and Amazonian Women ( <i>La Organización Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas Andinas y Amazónicas del Perú</i> )
PEREMPUAN AMAN	Association of Indigenous Women of The Archipelago
RECOFTC	Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific
REFACOF	African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests
WAVES	Weaving Leadership for Gender Equality



# OVERVIEW

## How to use this Training Handbook

This handbook supports trainers and facilitators in developing their own workshop materials. It provides a set of lecture notes, suggested discussion questions and debate activities, as well as some additional reading resources. On the website, "[Roadmaps to gender and social inclusion](#)", users of this handbook will also be able to download an associated PowerPoint presentation and infographics.

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## Handbook objectives

This training handbook accompanies the publication, *Forest tenure pathways to gender equality: A practitioner's guide*, which lays out a three-step change pathway, *Analyze, Strategize and Realize* (Figure 1). In particular, this document addresses step number three, *Realize*. The training that follows describes an approach to building up a core group of women and men leaders who will champion the forest tenure pathway to gender equality. Using this approach requires a good understanding of the conditions under which diverse leadership can flourish and capably create change. The content of the handbook and its handouts are illustrative and can be tailored to your training requirements. For example, if the handbook is used for government staff or members of a non-governmental organization, the content and exercises can be adjusted to suit the knowledge background and interests of participants.

The aim of this training handbook on *Gender accelerators: Women and men leading the way on local forest tenure reform* is to:

- a. Understand the conditions under which women and men can pursue and build their leadership capabilities;
- b. Learn how to cultivate leadership qualities through skills development;
- c. Share the lessons from leaders through poignant stories of change.

## Time

The total time for this training course is about six hours.

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## Participants

The number of suggested participants for this training is between 15 and 25.

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## Who can join

The training handbook is focused on supporting those practitioners who are actively working towards gender-responsive forest tenure reform. It is open to both women and men from a range of backgrounds such as governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), donor agencies, project staff, women's organizations and other organizations such as forest federations, forest committees or forest groups.



## Facilitators

Two facilitators are needed to instruct the course. It is important to find experienced and gender-sensitive facilitators who are well-versed in the development of gender equality work, are familiar with main concepts in the gender debate, understand the overall conceptual issues in the gender and forestry sector, and have good teaching and discussion skills. They should be able to initiate ice-breakers, give engaging lectures and lead out in small-group activities.

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## Equipment

Two flipcharts, marker pens, sticky notes, colored paper (of different sizes), adhesive tape to display flipchart sheets, a white board, name tags, notebooks, a computer, a projector and pens for all participants.

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## Preparation

The amount and type of preparation needed will depend on the trainer's approach to the program. Taking the time to prepare PowerPoint presentations, flip charts and other supportive materials ahead of time can aid the training process.

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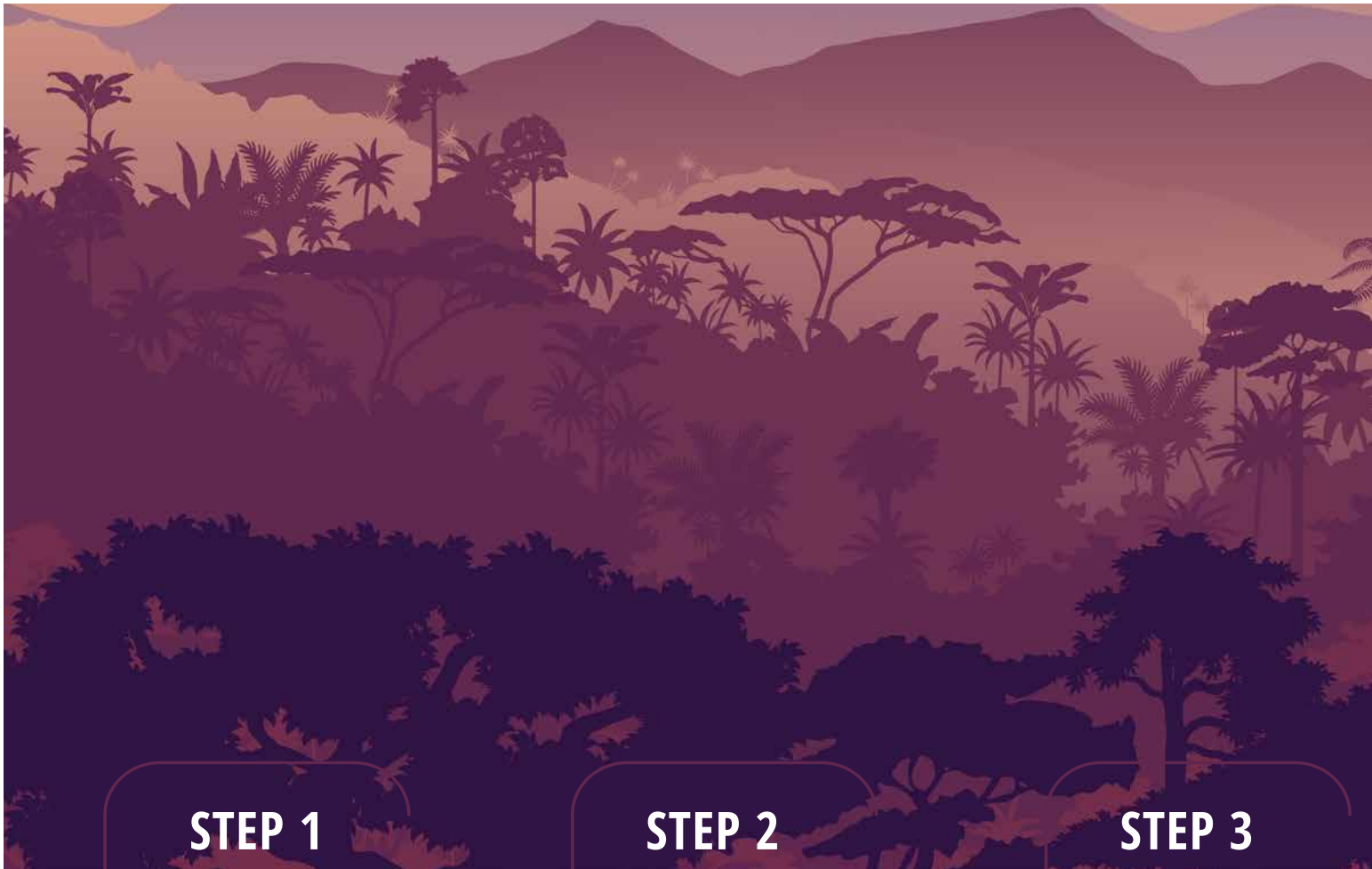
<sup>1</sup>See also Figure 6 in Jhaveri (2020).



### **BACKGROUND READING**

Chapter 1.5 of *Forest tenure pathways to gender equality: A practitioner's guide* (Jhaveri 2020).

# STEPS & SCHEDULE

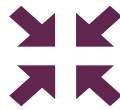


## STEP 1



**INFLUENTIAL WOMEN  
AND MEN LEADERS**  
The only way is up

## STEP 2



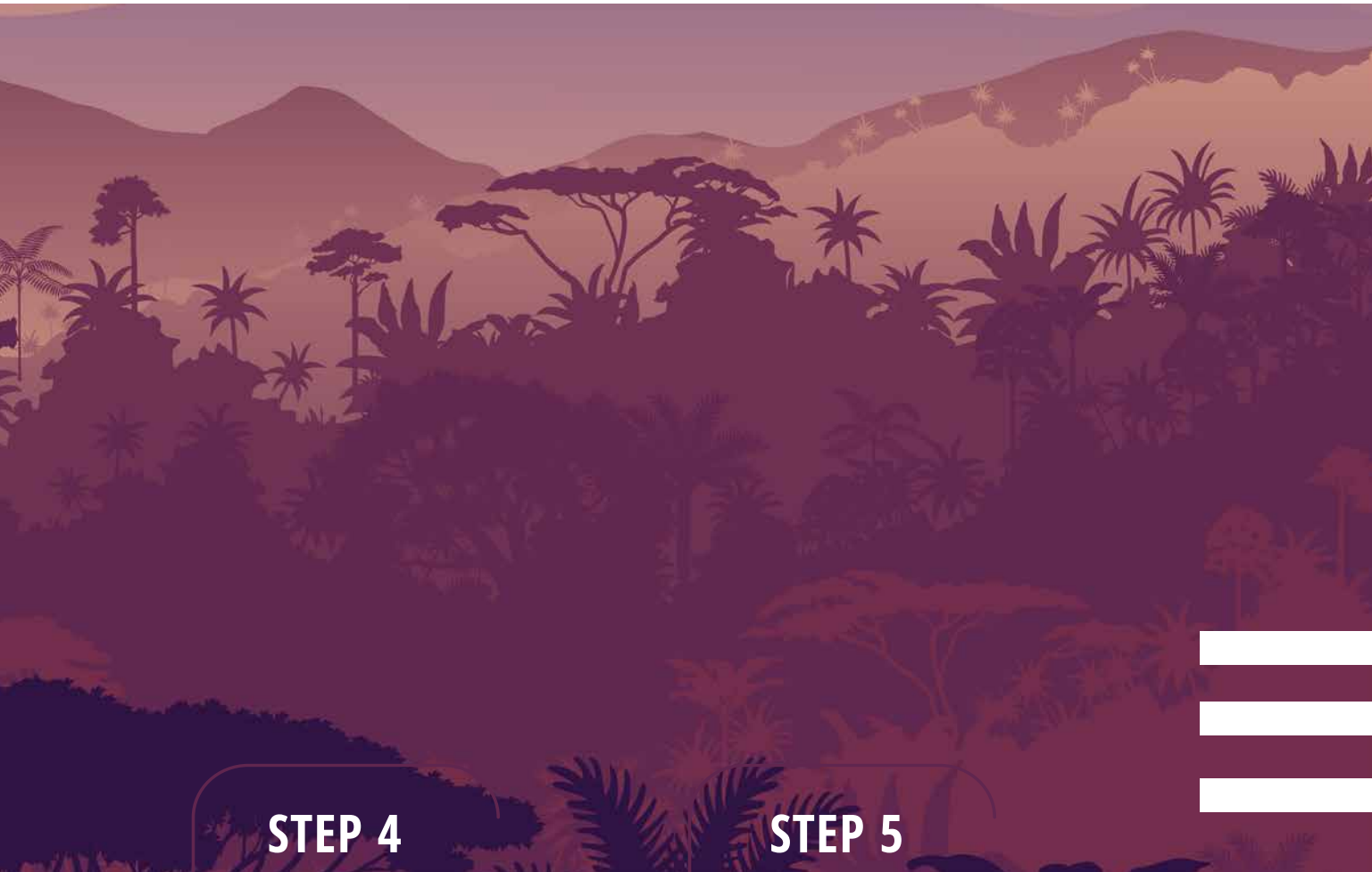
**PLEDGING LEADERSHIP**  
Women and men for equal  
forest rights

## STEP 3



**INNOVATIVE CHANGE**  
Cultivating leadership  
circles





## STEP 4



### THE MAGIC OF DYNAMIC CONNECTIVITY

Building federations,  
networks and alliances

## STEP 5



### JUMPSTARTING POWER AT LARGE

Poignant stories of  
change

# SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

## ARRIVAL & REGISTRATION

Participants pick up their training materials and nametags.

08:00–08:30



Facilitators and participants introduce themselves. The facilitators will also give an overview of the meeting space and facilities.

08:30–09:00



## COURSE OVERVIEW

The facilitators introduce the gender toolkit and its relationship to the *Practitioner's Guide*. They will go over the training sequence, workshop schedule, and handout materials provided in the pack.

09:00–09:15



## FIRST LECTURE & DISCUSSION

“Influential women and men leaders: The only way is up.” This session will be followed by a moderated group discussion.

09:15–09:45



11:30–12:00

“How to build leadership circles.”



12:00–12:30

## FOURTH LECTURE

“The magic of dynamic connectivity: Building federations, networks, and alliances.”



12:30–13:15

## DEBATE

“How women leaders can influence male-dominated forestry institutions.”

## SECOND LECTURE & DISCUSSION

“Pledging leadership: Women and men for equal forest rights.” This session will help participants understand the conditions under which women and men can lead together and flourish.

09:45–10:15



## BRAINSTORMING SESSION

“What support is needed to encourage women and men forest tenure champions at the local level?”

10:15–10:45



Suggested break

10:45–11:00



## THIRD LECTURE

“Innovative change: Cultivating leadership circles.”

11:00–11:30



13:15–14:00

Lunch



14:00–14:45

## FIFTH LECTURE

“Jumpstarting power at large: Poignant stories of change.”  
STORYTELLING SESSIONS  
“How women became forest tenure leaders.”



14:45–15:00

## CLOSING

Workshop evaluation and closing remarks.

# TRAINING HANDBOOK STEPS



## STEP 1

### **Influential women and men leaders: The only way is up**

LECTURE & FACILITATED DISCUSSION

*30 minutes*

#### **NOTE TO FACILITATORS**

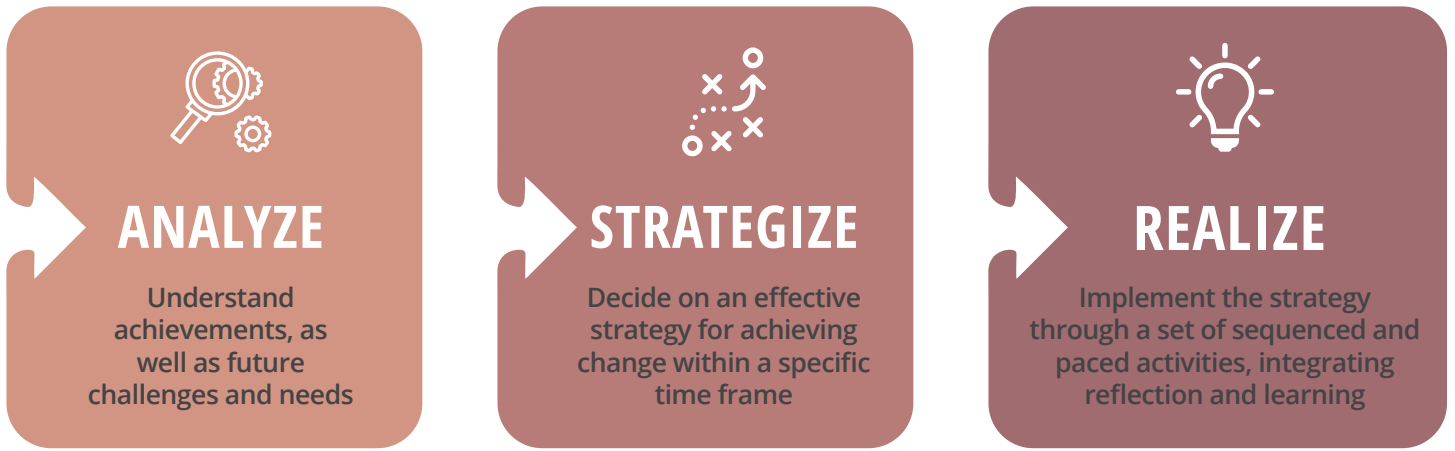
*This first step outlines some background information on forest tenure champions and outlines the importance of empowering women and other under-represented groups in forest governance. Use the materials below to prepare a lecture and facilitated discussion for the training's participants.*

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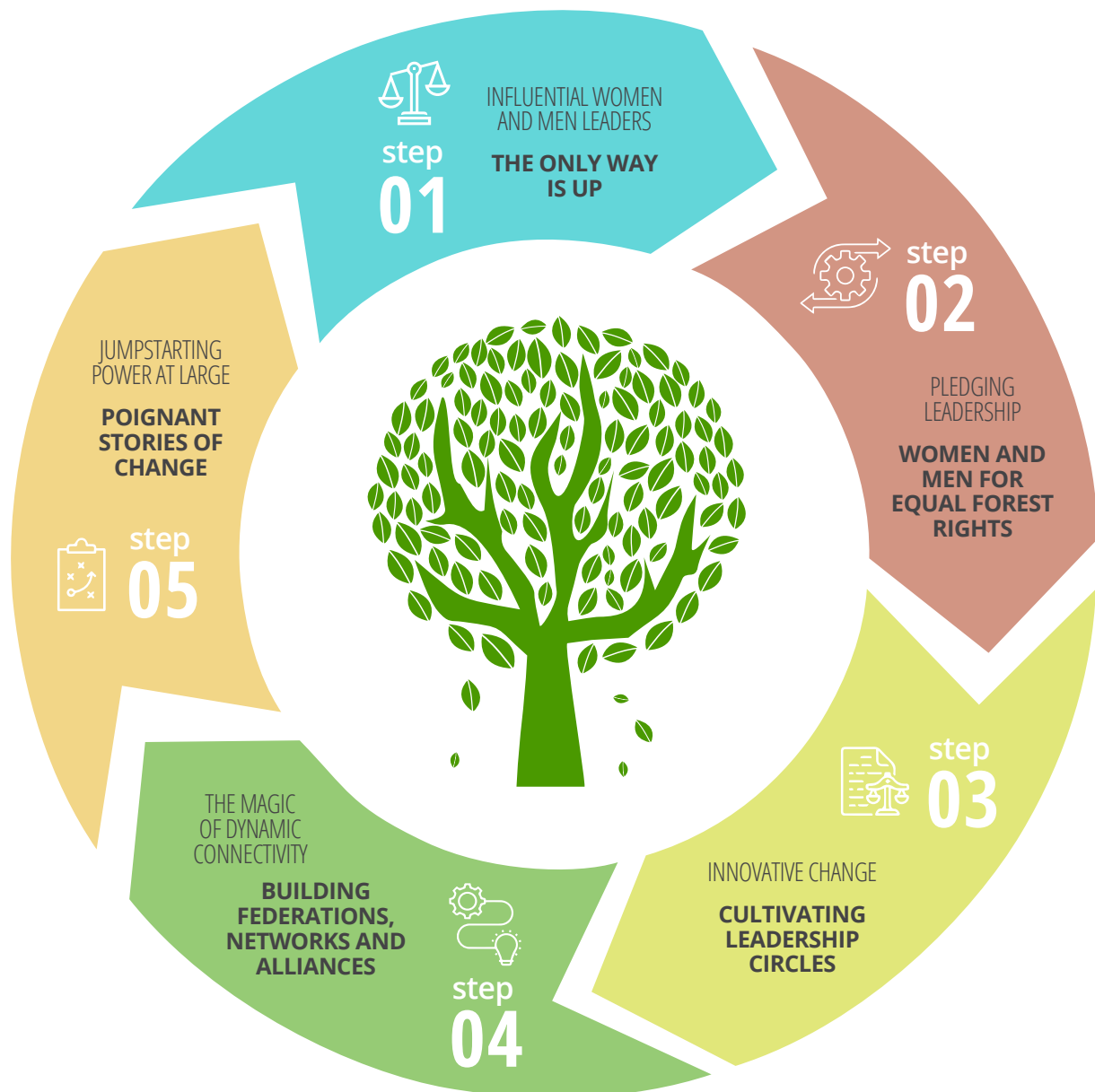
This handbook focuses on the third step of the pathway that is outlined in the Practitioner's Guide, *Realize* (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> It encourages a fresh look at how to inspire and mobilize gender accelerators — dynamic and forward-looking women and men who will champion the transformation of community-based forest tenure institutions at the local level. In this way, a vision of progressive change becomes the motivator for dedicated tenure champions. In order to achieve responsible gendered governance of forest tenure, influential and inspiring gender accelerators will need to receive consistent support. Such consistency is key for authentic leadership to emerge and to make persistent, long-term progress towards gender equality in forested landscapes.

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<sup>1</sup>See also Figure 6 in Jhaveri (2020).



**Figure 1.** Three steps for building gender-responsive accelerators for forest tenure reform.



**Figure 2.** Five steps for building women and men leaders as gender accelerators.

Forest tenure champions, both women and men, will need to be able to build power and influence, engage with effective networks, and create social mobilizations that allow for equal participation in forest governance. Sharing success stories from such leaders not only encourages others, but creates learning opportunities for overcoming diverse obstacles. This handbook will teach participants (a) how influential women and men leaders emerge, (b) how to identify female leaders and male champions who will take the forest tenure pledge for gender equality, (c) how to create training within leadership circles to build innovative ideas and positive influence, (d) how to engage with networks and alliances for accelerated change and (e) how to create and share success stories that others can learn from (Figure 2).

Gender parity is possible in communities that manage their forests collectively, and there are many ways to achieve positive results in different contexts. While efforts to increase gender equality typically focus on increasing the percentage of women in governance, usually aiming for up to 50% female membership, numbers alone are not enough. Interventions must also challenge prevailing gender norms, forest governance rules and enhance individual capabilities to truly empower women. Such work considers women's needs, knowledge and contributions to forest management at the planning stage. Therefore, in all cases, it is important to empower female and male leaders who want to tackle existing patterns of inequity while also improving the overall approach to gender-responsive sustainable forest management and livelihoods in their communities. These leaders will be the emboldened catalysts for change. They can pioneer new ways of doing things that enable other women and men, including those in the younger generations, to help pave tenure pathways for gender equality.

Gender accelerators can emerge from many backgrounds. For example, they could be men who recognize the vital role that women's knowledge and skills play in

forest management and who would like to see women have formalized authority within forest decision-making processes. Such men would also be aware of the additional responsibilities many women have as household caretakers and would remain sensitive to their needs. Female accelerators can be older women who have gained wide respect and understanding for their knowledge on how to govern forest areas and who now want to assert their perspectives in the interests of improving the community. Leaders may also be young women who have had a chance to gain a formal education and can draw upon their skills and capabilities for the greater good.

#### LISTEN



#### ***Voice and vote for Indigenous women who manage forest lands.***

“For indigenous women, our land is a sacred space that cannot be sold or divided up,” said Ketty Marcelo Lopez, President of the National Organization of Indigenous Andean and Amazonian Women (ONAMIAP). “By stewarding these lands, we play a fundamental role in food security, the preservation of biodiversity, and the governance of our territories. But without voice and vote, women cannot fully use and protect the lands and forests we all rely on.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Lopez's quote appears in Bigda (2017). Read more about her advocacy work in Unfold Stories (2021).



## GROUP DISCUSSION

### Status of women leaders in local forest institutions

Ask your group to reflect on some of the following questions. You may wish to pre-prepare some examples to facilitate discussion:

1. In your country, can you think of any female leaders who are active in issues of forest governance and forest tenure?
  - b. How did they become leaders?
  - c. What factors helped or allowed them to become leaders?
  - d. Have these female leaders emerged in relation to a crisis or the need for integrated reform of forest tenure regulatory system?
  - e. What level of influence and recognition do they have among local women, in governance bodies, with government officials, and more broadly?
  - f. What aspects of their leadership could benefit from constructive criticism?
2. What type of leadership style do female leaders, young and old, often utilize to cultivate inspiration and action for changing forest tenure rules?



## STEP 2

# Pledging leadership: Women and men for equal forest rights

LECTURE & FACILITATED DISCUSSION

*60 minutes*

### NOTE TO FACILITATORS

*This second step in the handbook provides information on how to support women on their leadership journey to become forest tenure champions. Use the materials together with Jhaveri (2020) to prepare a lecture and facilitated discussion.*

Individuals who chose to become forest tenure champions have taken the first step by showing interest in becoming active members; however, fostering successful leaders requires many people working together. Alone, a woman struggling to follow her dream and participate in forest governance is unlikely to succeed, but through active support networks, new female and male leaders can come into their own.

Some of the main obstacles that aspiring women leaders face are the invisible gender norms that determine how women and men of different ages and backgrounds carry out their daily activities at home, in the fields, in the forest and so on. Often, these norms favour men as the more “legitimate” knowledge-holders about the forests, even though it may be women who physically interact with the forest on a daily basis. Similarly, social norms often set boundaries around who can participate in public spaces, attend meetings, engage actively in governance and work to monitor and patrol forested landscapes.

Additionally, women may be discouraged from participating actively in forest governance because they often have additional burdens at home that men do not. This is particularly true for poorer households where women may not have time to attend community forest governance meetings, dialogue with government officials or attend training workshops. Therefore, these women need someone to support them in their participation. This person could be a husband who is keen on his wife participating in forest management or a mother-in-law who sees the benefits of her younger daughter-in-law taking on a formal role in forest decision-making. Most often, women who participate in forest governance are those who have married young and finished their childrearing activities; they are more free to engage in leadership.



There are many ways that communities can support upcoming leaders from within. For example, supporters may help women save time by investing in labor-reducing technologies, such as milling tools and washing machines. Other women and men in the community may offer to take on some additional responsibilities for aspiring women leaders including looking after the elderly or taking children to school. The existing male-dominated leadership also has a role to play in carving out spaces that are more welcoming to women and new leaders in the community.

Of course, additional support can come in the form of external groups such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or forest department extension staff. Forest extension staff or legal empowerment organizations can help emerging leaders better understand the government rules and procedures for obtaining, recognizing and maintaining community-based forest tenure rights. Forest NGOs can support the creation of female-led forest cells that incubate new women leaders. Many current female leaders emerged from mother's groups, women's health groups and so on where they developed the confidence and awareness to speak on various issues. Supportive female groups such as these can give women the experience they need to launch their own women's forest cell. These cells can help budding forest leaders to brainstorm, think strategically, learn the laws and regulations surrounding forest tenure, and problem solve in a safe environment. In addition to the practical support women receive, women-only incubators also foster emotional solidarity between members to keep up the difficult work of leadership. Without this support, the motivation for women to embark on a leadership journey can quickly fizzle away when obstacles emerge.

Parallel to these female-led forest groups, women must work with male leaders in the community to develop and implement gender-equal tenure rights. Collaborative efforts between these groups can build support for electing female members to forest-governance bodies and improve women's legal awareness. For example, a project in Kenya's Mau Forest recorded significant gender-relations improvements in customary justice regimes when male leaders were trained to support women's participation (USAID 2015). When the current leaders are willing to work for gender equality, the entire system is more likely to nurture inclusive forest tenure regimes (Figure 3).

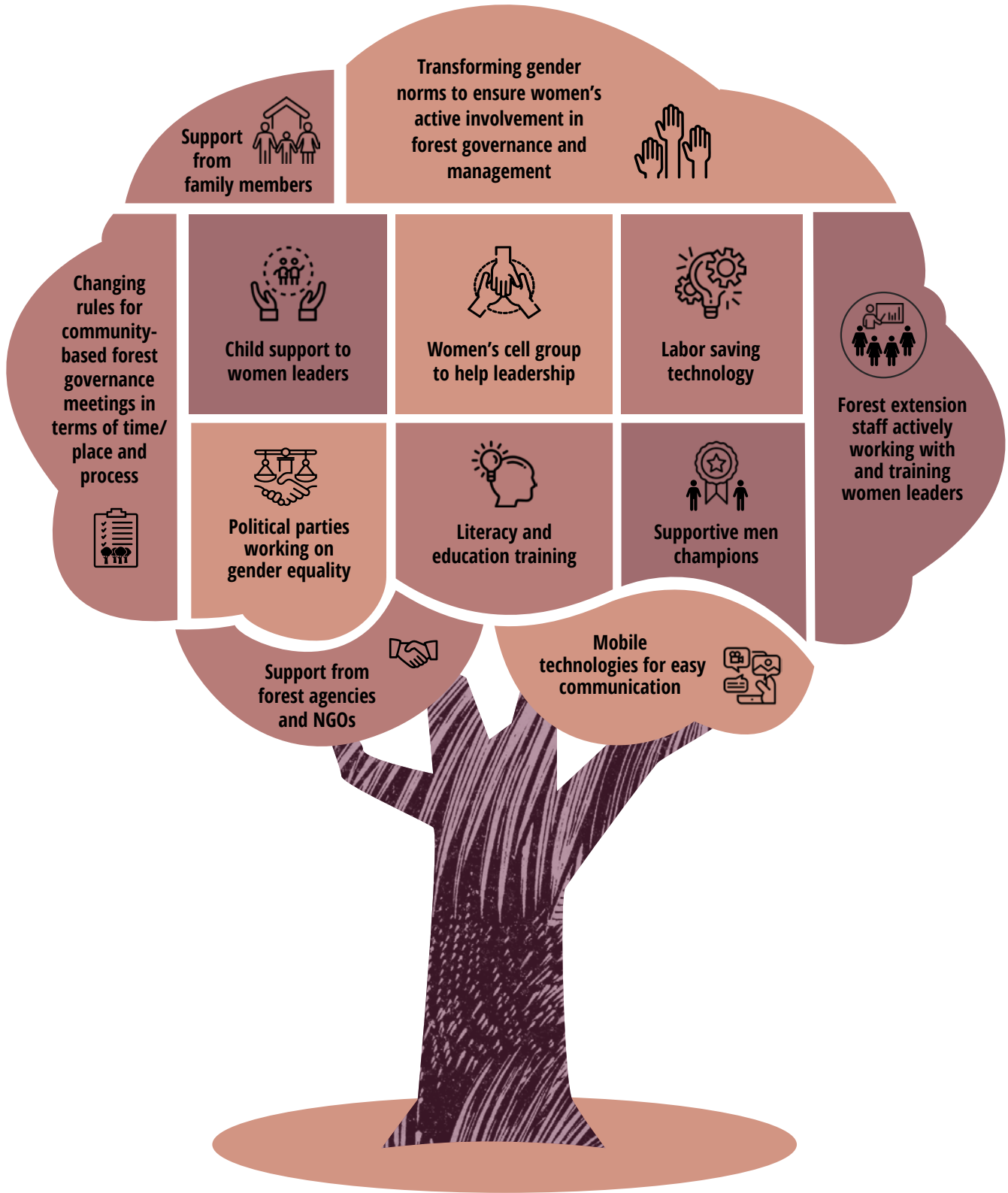


## GROUP DISCUSSION

### How can we support forest tenure champions at the local level?

Ask the group to reflect on the following questions:

1. Using Figure 3, discuss how your own community-based forest governance institutions can support forest tenure champions — both women and men — at the local level. Feel free to add or delete any blocks in the figure.
  - b. Which of these building blocks would be easy to implement?
  - c. Which ones would take longer to implement but would produce worthwhile results over time?
  - d. Which would require additional resources or funds to implement?
  - e. Which are not relevant to your specific context(s)?



**Figure 3.** Twelve building blocks for forest tenure champions.



## STEP 3

# Innovative change: Cultivating leadership circles

LECTURE

60 minutes

### NOTE TO FACILITATORS

*Step 3 provides information and visualizations on cultivating leadership circles in complex social settings. Use the materials provided here and in *The Practitioner's Guide* to prepare a lecture.*

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What does it take to be an inspiring and authoritative leader? For women, the challenge is often more onerous than it is for men because social norms tend to support men in leadership positions. Even when men recognize the need for more female leadership on their teams, they may be conditioned to prefer quiet, docile and cooperative women who will support their goals. In these cases, token women will probably be selected from among their own social networks. Although these representations of male leaders border on caricature, they are not exactly incorrect. So when a woman with an independent vision and approach wants to join a forest governance body, the social dynamics can become complicated. Such interactions can generate positive momentum but also rigid blocks.

The question then becomes: what is needed for women to take on forest leadership roles without encountering “rigid blocks”? To succeed, women will need to develop a cluster of valuable skills (Figure 4). The following 10 skill-building tips and suggestions address aspiring female leaders directly, setting out practical steps to grow their influence and participation in forest tenure governance. While the list may seem long, the idea is to use these points to help jumpstart your thinking about which skills apply to your particular context and leadership needs. Trainers and NGOs may also organize training workshops around these concepts to help develop skills for aspiring leaders. Already, several different leadership schools exist to provide supportive training for rural women (Fairtrade International 2020). A learning-by-doing approach brings about the best results and experience.



**Figure 4.** Ten skills for effective women leaders on forest tenure and governance.

# Ten skills for effective women leaders on forest tenure and governance

## Crafting a forest leadership vision

Having a clear vision for your leadership role is a pivotal requirement. Writing down a few motivating sentences about your goals and what you hope to achieve as a leader will obviously help rally women and men to support your cause. While you do this, think about how you can communicate the need for gender equality in your community's leadership structure. Sometimes, communities may think equality between the sexes is an idea introduced from the outside world. Therefore, you should think about real, practical examples that show how the lack of gender fairness affects your particular communities (among the poor and rich). You should demonstrate how working towards gender equality can address key issues standing in the way of overall development and improvement in order to help build momentum. You may also work together with a women's support cell with members representing the range of social and economic status to jointly craft a forest leadership vision. The cell can then build upon your initial ideas in strategic ways to create change pathways for gender equality.

## Engaging in breakthrough thinking

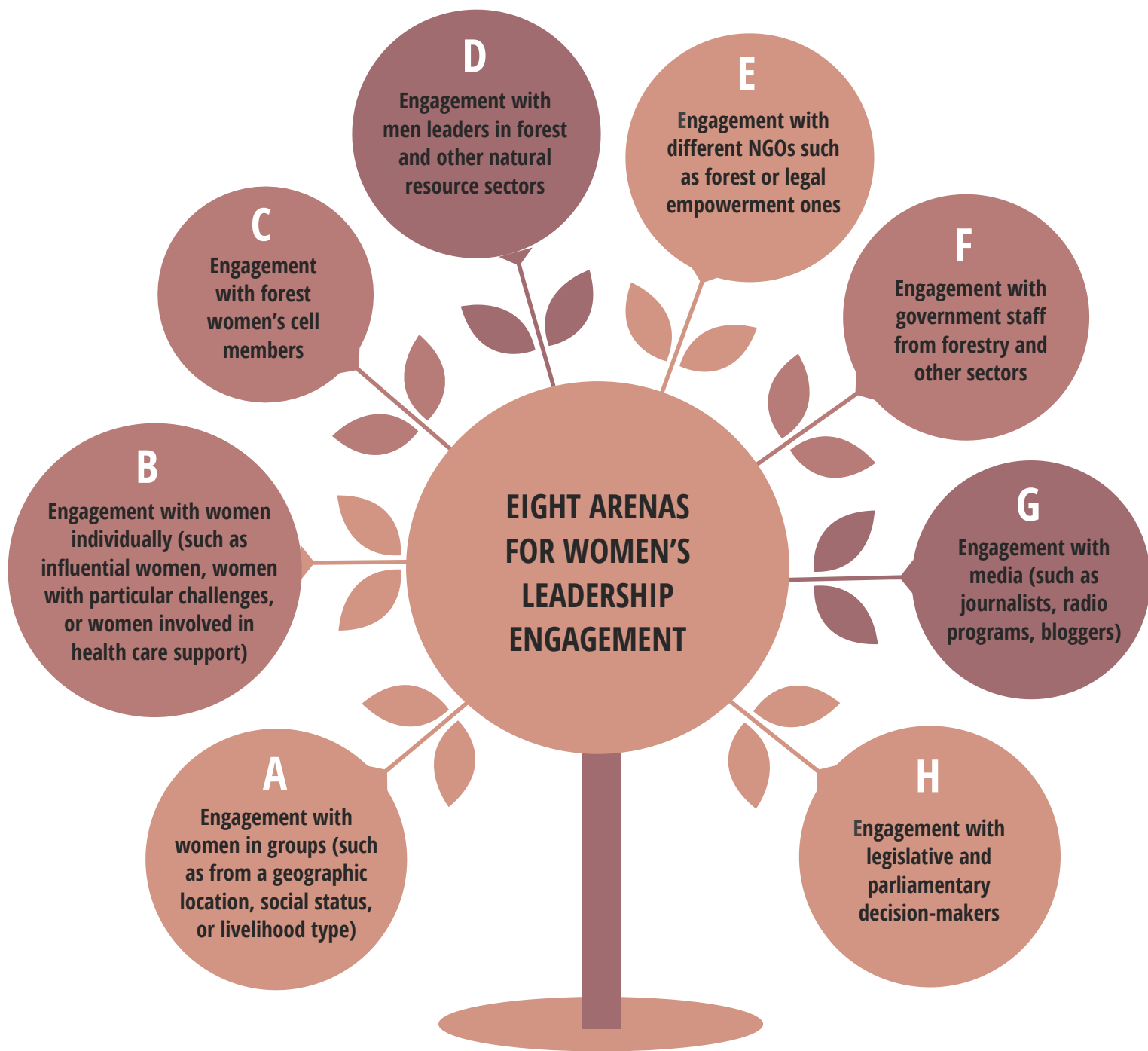
It is no simple task to challenge gender roles, stereotypes, attitudes and knowledge. Rather, this work requires breakthrough thinking to change long-held misconceptions among old and young. While engaging in this process, remember to focus on the positive forest benefits that both women and men would receive from greater gender equality in leadership; this approach typically brings everyone together, even as cherished pre-conceptions are dismantled. Take some time to anticipate the types of obstacles you will encounter

and brainstorm ways to increase social trust between interest groups. How will you build upon existing strengths in governance to champion gender parity? What are the new ideas you are bringing to the table?<sup>3</sup> Remember that you will need to collaborate with village leaders, religious heads, school teachers and political-party leaders in order for your ideas to gain traction in the community of forest users. Also, while thinking about how to build community support for women to participate in leadership, it is best to engage more than just husbands. Other important members of the family including in-laws, other wives and youth can be important allies for gender parity, depending on the cultural context. Think about the varied arenas for interventions needed to bring about a broader and inclusive synergy of interests and action (Figure 5).

## Creating tangible change

Well-thought-out actions can create tangible changes that deliver benefits sooner rather than later. For example, rather than only focusing on the human rights angle of gender equality, you should demonstrate how more fair forest-management rules can create new benefit streams that bring women and men together to generate wealth and well-being. Also, consider how improved gender equality could facilitate greater technological or communication support for many women and men on forest issues. You may also consider some trade-offs in working for gender parity in forest governance; some benefits may be lost, but others would be gained. With this mindset, you can more easily weave gender concerns into discussions about the main forestry issues that concern the community. Some ideas for real actions include setting up a women's support cell, a radio program on gender and forestry, a funding pool for labor reduction technologies, better gender-sensitive silvicultural practices, gender-responsive forest planning and zonation, or new forest-based enterprises that engage women and men. As these actions meet with success, there will be a growing sense of community achievement; interest and commitment in gender equality will inevitably expand among forest users, both women and men.

<sup>3</sup>See Figure 25 in Jhaveri (2020).



**Figure 5.** Eight arenas for women's leadership engagement in community-based forest tenure and governance.

## Public speaking and negotiations training

Being able to communicate verbally with authority and confidence is an essential skill for leaders, so public speaking is a good way to demonstrate your leadership capabilities. Speaking well also involves storytelling skills to persuasively share insights that are relevant and interesting to your audience. Consider telling a personal story, inspiring anecdote, or sharing how thankful you are for those who have supported you to make deeper connections with your audience. Bringing some fun into the speech can also help to diffuse any tensions in the group. Think carefully about how to discuss difficult forest and gender issues to avoid dividing the group. In addition to public speaking, negotiations training is vital because it is the only way to achieve results and real change in forest-governance bodies.<sup>4</sup>

## Gender-sensitive facilitators

All activities that support women's leadership and gender-responsive forest governance will require a cadre of well-trained gender-sensitive facilitators, both women and men. Facilitators are needed to run workshops, women's forest cells, men's gender-champion clubs, forest-governance meetings and so on. Each of these approaches will require access to good audiovisual materials so that facilitators can easily communicate their messages and train others. An additional group of supportive facilitators from among members of forest governance bodies or forest users can help work with small groups of women or men to ensure all parties have a good understanding of the issues. These facilitators can explain or translate concepts and resolve any disputes between stakeholders. It is recommended to carry out an assessment to determine how women leaders and facilitators will be provided with safety, security and well-being.

## Men's gender champion clubs

These clubs provide a venue to not only enhance their awareness of gender-related issues, but also to discuss challenges, change strategies, implement ideas, and share

valuable lessons. Through such clubs, toxic and supportive masculinities can be identified and ideas developed for progressive change. Masculinities in forested areas vary greatly from place to place (Colfer et al. 2020; Colfer 2021), so you should give detailed, context-specific attention to how the norms in your community can be transformed into those that support gender equality. With time, men's gender champion clubs can become organic nodes for growth as more men, young and old, recognize the benefits of strengthening women's forest tenure rights in key areas such as income generation and livelihoods support. Group work will likely include discussions around how to forge alliances between male champions and women leaders. The club can informally endorse particular approaches that can be rolled out within the community in collaboration with the local forest governance body and government offices. Rather than creating divisions between women and men (of different backgrounds), such clubs can consider the possibility of building a consensual approach for achieving development goals including gender equality. In doing so, identifying likely obstacles will help in devising a strategy for change.

## Leveraging data and knowledge

It is essential to promote empirically-grounded understandings of the challenges facing women and men in forested landscapes. Doing so will not only draw the attention of government and donor agencies but also create a strong basis for engaging with the media, NGOs, and others. Therefore, it is important to initiate grounded studies of current gender-related challenges and needs; once the research is completed, it is equally critical to distill the data and visualize key findings. Any story that builds from data-driven insights is a powerful one. For example, measuring gender norms will help to make more visible those accepted, but unfair, ideas that work in an invisible way in everyday life (Sood et al. 2020). Moreover, democratizing the use of data collected in local contexts will help bring everyone to the dialogue and support the realization of their tenure rights. Democratizing data will likely require digital literacy training in today's world.

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<sup>4</sup>See *Her His Forest Tenure Insight no. 9* in Jhaveri (2020).

### Mobilizing leader visibility

One way for you to build public curiosity and support for women's leadership is to be active not only in forest governance bodies but also in other related governance or self-help groups that are locally influential. Taking on additional responsibilities will take extra time and energy, but women who rise in leadership positions within community-based forestry can also rise to other positions through local government elections or in multi-district forest coordination committees. In this way, you can gain additional knowledge, build multiple networks, and achieve greater influence in key arenas.

### Building second-line leaders

Thinking long-term means that you need to cultivate a second line of capable leaders, both women and men, who are committed to gender equality values. Some careful thought as to how to allow up-and-coming women and men with interest to gain experience, learn new skills and demonstrate their capabilities early on will support the rise of this next generation of leaders. It is those long-term leaders who are best placed to create spaces for emerging leadership while sharing their insights and lessons along the way. This type of engagement between experienced and emerging leadership in different contexts will create exposure to the multiple facets of becoming an influential leader.

### Celebrating the gains

Regularly recognizing the hard work and achievements of your community's women and men champions for equal forest tenure rights is a must. Publicly celebrating your team's wins, be it through prizes and awards or through a radio program that showcases their stories, is an integral part of leadership. Circles of support and collaborative work create the results that bring gender equality into visibility. It is a culture of recognition that makes these shifts over time tangible and appreciated.



### GROUP DISCUSSION

#### How to build leadership circles?

Form small groups and have each choose one of the following three subjects to discuss:

1. Forming a supportive women's cell for forest leadership;
2. Creating a men's gender champion club;
3. Building linkages between women leaders and men champions.

In each group, identify strategic approaches for building these three types of structures at the local level. Report back to the group and discuss ideas for how these structures can help change patterns of gender inequity in forest tenure and governance.





## STEP 4

# The magic of dynamic connectivity: Building federations, networks and alliances

LECTURE & FACILITATED DISCUSSION

*30 minutes*

### NOTE TO FACILITATORS

*The information in step 4 may be used to help you prepare a lecture and facilitated discussion on how to build federations, networks and alliances that strive for gender equality in forest governance.*

While it is important to work with local government institutions, promoting gender equality in forest governance also requires a more horizontal form of dynamic connectivity with groups and organizations outside the locality. These types of connections can be a mobilizing tool for women leaders, as research has shown that linkages with broader organizations such as federations, networks and alliances can help bring about much-needed transformations on the pathway to gender equality (Agarwal 2015).<sup>5</sup>

There are many different types of federations, networks, and alliances that work in community-based forestry around the world. They have emerged during phases of forest tenure reform and have been important for achieving key milestones in national-level forest tenure regulatory frameworks (Paudel et al. 2012). Increasingly, many of these organizations are focusing on gender equality issues and have adopted different institutional approaches. It is worthwhile to look at these multiple

types of horizontal linkages and how they have grown. One such horizontal approach is used by localized, state-level networks such as Odisha Jungle Manch, which was formed in India's Odisha state in 1999. Working with 12,000 villages, it plays a critical role as a state-level pressure group, monitoring the state's activities. The network also works to carry out gender integration at all levels of governance. Indeed, research by Odisha has revealed that women who are constrained from making forest decisions at the local government level will seek to create changes through community forest federations. For example, federations can help businesswomen obtain better market terms and local outlets to sell their kendu (*Shorea robusta*) leaves to government-monopoly forest corporations (Singh 2012). The local Maa Maninag Jungle Surakhya federation in India's Nayagarh district is one such rare case where women were able to carve out space for their interests in this way.

National forestry federations offer a second type of linkage that women can leverage to engage in forest governance. With a membership that includes about 40% of Nepal's population, the Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal (FECOFUN) has played a seminal role in changing the rules on women's participation in general assemblies of community-forestry user groups — a type of forest governance body. It has also pushed for 50:50 representation by women and men in the executive committee of user groups (Ojha et al. 2007; McDougall and Banjade 2015).<sup>6</sup> Moreover, since its inception in 1995, there have been two women chairpersons for FECOFUN.

A third type of linkage occurs when a women's group is part of a lead organization at either the national or regional level. Such lead organizations have typically been focused on Indigenous Peoples rights. One important network is the Association of Indigenous Women of The Archipelago PEREMPUAN AMAN — a side branch of the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN) — which was formed in 2012 at the Fourth Indigenous Peoples' Congress of the Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago (PEREMPUAN AMAN 2017).<sup>7</sup> The network emerged after a persistent struggle by a group of female leaders, stretching back to AMAN's start in 1999. Prior to 2012, at AMAN's Third Congress, a Directorate of Indigenous Women's Empowerment was formed. This created the platform for PEREMPUAN AMAN, which was built from women's experience to provide a place from which to learn and consolidate themselves so they could voice their own interests. PEREMPUAN AMAN's vision is to create a world where "Indigenous women have full control over themselves, their lives and surroundings in order to realize sovereign, independent and dignified status as Indigenous Peoples." Their strategic approach is based on four main themes: capacity building, knowledge, advocacy, and learning. The outgoing female head of AMAN, Rukka Sombolinggi, also helped to advance their cause.

Similarly, in Latin America<sup>8</sup>, the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB) has recognized the need to create a dedicated space for women and youth in its member organizations and communities (Buffle 2020). This recognition is reflected in the alliance's policy goals and in their efforts to strengthen their member's supply chains — particularly those for women. As a result, the women leaders of the AMPB formed the Coordination of Mesoamerican Territorial Women Leaders as a platform for discussing issues, developing political strategies, and exchanging knowledge. One of their important achievements has been setting up a Mesoamerican Fund for the Strengthening of Business Capacities of Indigenous Women and Community-Based Organizations (FOMUJER). In another federation, the Coordinating Body for the Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA), women leaders from 17 grassroots territorial organizations and 11 Latin American countries met in 2018 to strengthen their representation and elect new leadership (Davies 2018). A Woman's Council was set up within COICA to address women's issues and gender equality. One of the problems that has been identified in such linked organizations is the limited degree of autonomy that the women's organizations are able to exert within the main organizations. There have been concerns among men that women's issues are taking away from these organizations' main focus on territorial sovereignty and issues of collective rights. These concerns reflect prevailing gender norms that imply women's concerns are less important or should be subsumed under the primary focus on how to secure territorial sovereignty.

A fourth type of connection that women leaders can benefit from is the women's regional network. One influential regional group is the African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests (REFACOF) in Africa. Started in May 2009, it now includes 17 countries within its network, primarily in west and central Africa.

<sup>5</sup> See also *Her His Forest Tenure Insight no. 19* in Jhaveri (2020).

<sup>6</sup> See also *Her His Forest Tenure Insight no. 6* in Jhaveri 2020

<sup>7</sup> For an analysis of the relationship between gender and forest tenure reform in Indonesia, see Siscawati 2020.

<sup>8</sup> For more details on women's participation in social movements related to the forest sector, see Schmink and Gómez-García 2015.

The group aims to reform forest governance by influencing national policies as well as international frameworks on women's rights and tenure. They have developed strategic alliances with key decision makers, such as parliamentarians, and traditional authorities, such as chiefs and mayors. The result has been the reinterpretation of long-held customs, rules, and practices that discriminate against women. A Common Position document was prepared with traditional chiefs to recognize that women should hold land and forest tenure rights (Bandiaky-Badji et al. 2016). One of REFACOF's central four pillars is to support the horizontal exchange of experiences among its members.

In Latin America, the National Organization of Indigenous, Andean, and Amazonian Women (ONAMIAP) was formed in 2009 to bring together Indigenous women from 20 different regions of Peru. One of their three main goals is improving territorial governance, including land and resource rights. The organization emerged out of more than 10 years of training and networking activities among grassroots, rural women's organizations that were catalysed by a Lima-based NGO dedicated to Indigenous cultural revival.

There has been some research on the benefits local women and men leaders can receive by dynamically connecting in this way (Figure 6).



## GROUP DISCUSSION

### **How women leaders can influence male-dominated forestry institutions.**

This debate will focus on how emerging women leaders in both urban or rural areas can best gain influence within a forestry federation that is dominated by men leaders. A panel of four persons will debate this issue. Four course participants will volunteer to take up the following positions:

1. The male head of the forestry federation who is maintaining the status quo;
2. A male forest tenure champion for women's rights;
3. A woman member of the central executive committee of the federation with limited power;
4. A powerful woman leader from a local forestry governance group who is mobilizing for real change within the forest federation.

A facilitator will organize the debate to hear the positions of four members of the debate panel on the question: Why is it important to have a rule in the federation's constitution that all local forest governance institutions should have 50% women members? Once the four panel members have set out their viewpoints, members of the audience (who are members of the federation) can pose their questions to any panelist. The facilitator will end the debate by summarizing the main points that have emerged from the panel.



**Figure 6.** Benefits of dynamic connectivity with forest federations, networks and alliances for women and men leaders.  
 Source: Adapted from Colchester et al. 2003; Paudel et al. 2012.



## STEP 5

# Jumpstarting power at large: Poignant stories of change

LECTURE

45 minutes

### NOTE TO FACILITATORS

*Step 5 is meant to inspire course participants on their leadership journey through stories of change from their fellow forest tenure champions, especially women. Use the materials provided here and in *The Practitioner's Guide to prepare a lecture.**

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Part of the process of creating large-scale change is to learn from the stories of other leaders and what they have achieved. All too often, these stories remain undocumented. What stories have you heard about how real women have been able to assert their varied forest tenure rights equally with men? It may be that some changes these women made were easy to achieve in a short space of time, while other important changes took considerably more time to realize. However, the wait may have been well-worth it. It is valuable to showcase success stories from likeminded women and men and to study how they achieved the changes that they sought. What are the personal journeys women and men have taken for becoming effective forest tenure leaders? What positive lessons do their stories teach?

For example, some research has documented the considerable strides leaders have taken to advance women's land rights (Her Land Her Story 2019). Other projects that gathered data on women's representation in community-based forest governance bodies show considerable increases in the number of women participating over a five-year period (Ihalainen 2016; Oeurm 2018; RECOFTC 2018). How were these successes achieved and what factors played a role? It may have been, for example, that an all-male forest patrolling and protection committee were unsuccessful at controlling illegal timber felling. Once a woman leader from the forest governance body took the initiative to add more women members to the forest patrolling and protection committee, illegal felling significantly declined. Other

areas in which leadership can change social dynamics is on gender norms. Changing these norms can take time and seem subtle, but they will still be quite noticeable among community members (USAID 2020). These unwritten rules about how women and men should behave at home, in community meetings, in forests, and with government staff play a very substantial role in determining the way local forest governance takes place. Therefore, forest tenure leaders need to have deep knowledge of local contexts to enact interventions that change the cultural landscape in rewarding ways.

The multiple types of lessons are inspirational by themselves, but they should also be broadcasted on social media that are accessible and influential. Some examples include radio shows, local workshops and events, posters and newspaper articles and online blogs and media.

One example of a project that specifically focuses on building leadership for gender equality in the forestry sector gives central emphasis to the stories women leaders share. In March 2019, the Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC) launched a new program called Weaving Leadership for Gender Equality (WAVES) with the aim of supporting gender equality in forest landscapes (RECOFTC 2019). To accomplish this, the center facilitated a collective space for women leaders to share experiences, lessons and initiatives from the local to national level. WAVES supports 35 leaders in their work to attain greater gender equity within their work or institutions. The group has also carried out a number of related activities across a wide swath of countries to address closing the gender gap, systems of gendered socialization, and enhancing leadership skills for women.

## LISTEN



***Dr Sindhu Prasad Dhungana, a Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Forests and Environment, Nepal is a male champion for gender equality (Australia Awards 2019).***

The role of men is very important for women in overcoming gender barriers in Nepal. Firstly, men can support their female family members in sharing household chores so that women have time to perform their leadership responsibilities. Secondly, male colleagues in office settings have a role in making the workplace gender friendly. This implies that the workplace is free of sexual harassment and encourages women to take part in decision-making processes. Male colleagues should listen to and address these issues, as gender sensitivity is crucial to build up women leaders. For example, men in the workplace may be unaware of or unconcerned by social norms surrounding the physical facilities of the office such as washroom privacy, vehicle safety, or working times (day or night); however, these factors can seriously affect the performance of professional women.



## STORYTELLING SESSIONS

### How women became forest tenure leaders

Divide the group into six and ask one female volunteer in each section to share their stories of how they became engaged in forestry-sector leadership within their community. Have participants discuss:

1. What inspired the women to start their leadership journeys?
2. What type of support did they receive?
3. What were the primary obstacles?
4. How did they persevere along the journey?
5. What are some of their primary achievements and what rewards did their commitment produce?

Once the group answers the questions for each of the volunteers, the designated group leader will summarize the discussion for the group. Then, members of the audience can pose questions.

A facilitator can wrap up the session by spotlighting some of the key lessons that emerged from the stories of the six women leaders.

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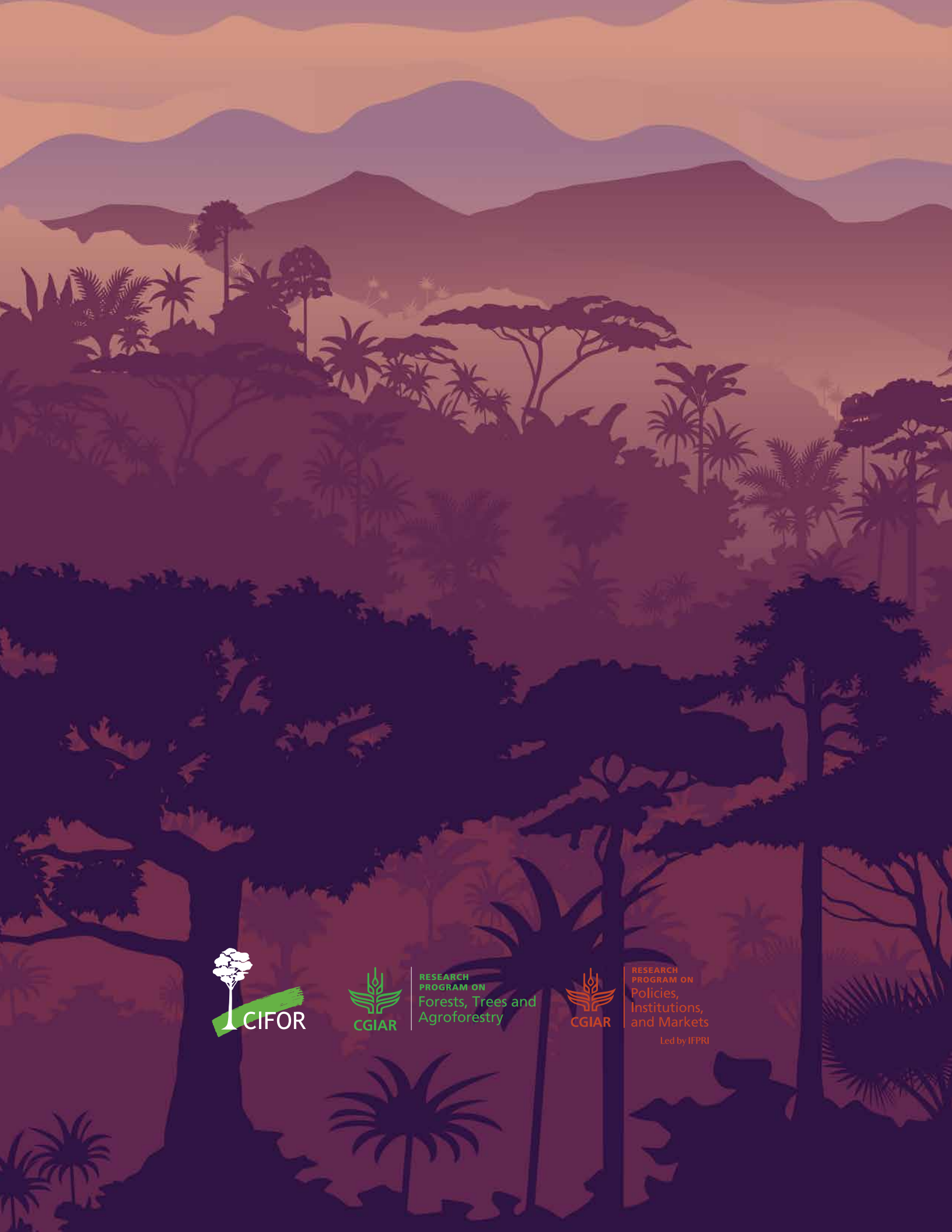
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