

Seventh Executive Forum  
on Natural Resource Management

# Watershed Governance

in a Context of Climate Change  
Tenure and Policy Reform Processes

6-10 August 2012  
SEARCA, Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines



Governing and managing watersheds for multiple purposes - ecological protection and conservation, agricultural production, poverty alleviation and other development objectives - involves making tradeoffs across stakeholder interests, ecosystem functions and ecosystem goods and services. How decisions over resources are made, who makes them and to whose benefit make up the essence of governance. One of the most significant challenges of watershed governance and management is the fact that the costs and benefits are unevenly distributed, and that security over the rights is uncertain. This sets the stage for potential conflict; yet cooperation and long-term collaboration among stakeholders is essential.

Previous and on-going attempts to manage watersheds and watershed resources have provided a wealth of experience and insights for the theory and practice of watershed governance. There is consensus that effective watershed governance requires holistic, interdisciplinary approaches. However, the day-to-day practice of watershed governance still remains largely insulated from this knowledge and experience. Policies and decisions about watersheds still tend to be viewed largely in hydrological terms and management generally remains fragmented, uncoordinated and often insensitive to the rights and well-being of people affected especially the poor and the powerless. The changing context, with its recent flurry of climate change related discourses, presents new challenges, and the urgency of a paradigm shift that would lead towards a more effective form of governance is stressed.

The five-day executive forum is a collaboration between the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA), Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC), and the ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN). It will focus on key concepts, governance models, practical tools and techniques for conceptualizing, designing, implementing and managing processes and institutions for effective, equitable and ecologically sustainable use and management of watersheds and their ecosystem goods and services.

## Forum Objectives

At the end of the forum, the participants are expected to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of a range of issues and challenges in governing watershed tenure and possible options for responding to them;
2. Explain the dimensions of resource-related rights, how they are often infringed, and how tenure and governance processes and mechanisms can promote equity and protect the rights of vulnerable groups; and
3. Develop insights on the practicalities associated with institutional and management tools and interventions based on evidence and lessons from cases around the globe.

## For Whom

**Senior level land use planners and government officials** responsible for community forestry, water, natural resources and environmental management and regulation, with a minimum of 10 years working experience in the ASEAN region;

**Board members and leaders of watershed associations/councils and water/resource users federations;** and

**Senior staff of civil society organizations and corporate units** actively involved in implementing or supporting the implementation of watershed-based development strategies, management programs and projects.



## Content

### Module 1. Key Concepts in Watershed Governance

Conceptual shift from technocratic watershed management to multi-stakeholder, ecosystem governance based on watersheds as the base geographic unit for implementing the shift; tenure issues in the context of climate change.

### Module 2. Watershed Governance Issues and Challenges

Common issues and challenges confronting decision-makers, practitioners and participants in watershed governance: representation and participation in decision-making at different scales, asymmetries in information, capacities and power, and the trade-offs and equity implications associated with governance options and decisions.

### Module 3. Resource-Related Collaboration and Conflict, Rights and Equity

Dynamics of collaboration and conflict around ecosystem resources, and the approaches that have been used for negotiation, conflict management and promotion of collaboration; gender issues, rights of different stakeholders in conflict, employment of new protocols and instruments from international environmental governance regimes.

### Module 4. Models and Institutional Designs for Watershed Governance: Theory and Practice

Useful models and mechanisms in watershed governance: basic features, strengths, vulnerabilities and outcomes, and specific cases; institutional arrangements and mechanisms for structuring rewards and sanctions, preventing "free-riding" and for discouraging and dealing with corruption.

## Forum Outputs

Participants will:

**Prepare and share issues/challenges** they face in watershed management, focusing on tenure and governance processes. This case study will form the basis for group discussions during the forum; and

**Develop institutional designs and governance mechanisms** to address issues/challenges identified.

### For more information, please contact:

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