CHAPTER 8:   DISCUSSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1.   Introduction

Previous chapters have canvassed the many issues challenging good forest governance in Thailand. Results from interview sets one and two, and the literature review, indicate that there are a number of interconnected causes of governance failure. These are: conflict, complexity and inconsistency of regulations, leading to confusion and creating high costs of law enforcement; excessive discretionary power which, at times, leads to complexity and enables corruption; lack of resourcing of implementation and insufficient accommodation of stakeholder needs; unclear rights to forests, particularly affecting communities who are dependent upon forest resources; under-recognition of traditional forest knowledge and practices, which are an interconnected part of the livelihoods of forest dependent people; insufficient resources to properly govern forests; failure to utilise partnerships that could increase capacity; corruption as well as ineffective information-sharing; and a lack of trust and divergent views among stakeholders, which inhibits the creation of effective partnerships.

The conclusion from the multifaceted analysis described in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 is that there is a need for legal reform to forest governance arrangements in Thailand, accompanied by arrangements that will change the power balance between government agents, privileged entrepreneurs and corporations, and relatively disempowered communities. While there is inevitably a risk that empowerment of communities can accelerate some forms of loss of forest values, the evidence presented in this research strongly suggests that effective engagement, when supported by objective oversight, is an important way of ensuring that the maximum value is realised from public resources such as National forests. In forest reform, contemporary approaches place increasing emphases upon listening to the voices of those directly affected, rather than relying only upon the views of technical experts and privileged stakeholders. These stakeholders are treated as genuine partners in the development of the governance system for their resources. The engaged policy research approach adopted in this research reflects this change in forest governance theory and practice. This reflects both a complement and (partly) an alternative to the more traditional approach of legal scholarship, which relies largely upon formal documents to scope a law reform issue, and the views of the legal expert isolated from the community to define the possible solutions. The engaged approach to scholarship is intended to give rise to more inclusive approaches, which have a better chance of responding to the complex pressures of forest management in Thailand.

This Chapter focuses on how these challenges might be met. The paper by Phromlah, 'Reforming Governance for Sustainable Forest Management in Thailand' shown in Appendix 5, and the article, 'REDD+ Implementation in Thailand' included in Chapter 7, indicate the type of recommendations that might be suitable. In keeping with the engaged research methodology, recommendations were

drafted and discussed with key stakeholders in the forest governance system in Thailand. Section 8.2 lists and discusses each of the recommendations and details the responses of the consultants. Section 8.3 finalises the reform proposal for forest governance in Thailand.

8.2.   Draft recommendations and feedback from consultants

Ten recommendations were drafted for reforming Thailand's forest governance system. A systems based approach was used to clarify how action items influencing the operation of principal components might in turn influence forest governance criteria, and how implementation of one criterion might influence the implementation of another criterion. Systems maps of the links are presented with each recommendation. Two other factors underpin the drafting of recommendations: the feasibility of their implementation - took into account Thailand's economic capacity (availability of resources) to implement the recommendations, and the cultural and legal realities; the logic that only changing laws relevant to forest governance will be ineffective unless the surrounding institutional and social issues are also addressed as a whole.

Inevitably, the recommendations reflect both the data and analysis, coupled with the investigators' judgement about priorities and feasibility. To increase confidence in the practicality and feasibility of the recommendations, stakeholders likely to be involved in implementing reforms were consulted (see Section 2.4.5). The consultants (see Table 2.3) were divided into two groups: representatives from government who would be in charge of implementing the draft recommendations (decision-makers) and those not from this group who could influence decision-making (the influencers). All consultants were asked to comment on the usefulness and feasibility of the recommendations. They were initially contacted (by phone) to explain the nature of the exercise and to ask if they were willing to provide feedback. After the phone contact, consultants were sent a list of recommendations (see Appendix 6).[639] Because it was more convenient for discussion purposes, the researcher discussed the recommendations with stakeholders classified as 'decision-makers' in a group session and influencers in one-to-one sessions (see Table 2.3).

Section 8.2.1 to 8.2.10 discusses each of the recommendations. Note that the recommendations, like the 10 criteria they draw upon, are intertwined. Implementing one recommendation will help to implement aspects of other recommendations. Note too, that the steps that could be taken to

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[639] Consultants were actually sent 16 recommendations (with no explanation of the rationale behind the recommendations) rather than the 10 discussed in this thesis (see Appendix 6): Draft Recommendation 2: Reform fundamental legal and institutional structures in the Appendix 6 is a sub-recommendation under the Draft Recommendation 1: Improve coordination among relevant authorities discussed; Draft Recommendation 6: Provide clear definitions of rights; Draft recommendation7: Incorporate forest management and land use systems; and Draft recommendation 8: Right of next generation in Appendix 6are the sub recommendations under the Draft Recommendation 4: Provide security of rights over resources; Draft recommendation 10: Include disadvantage people in Appendix 6 is the sub recommendation under the; Draft recommendation 5: Recognise traditional forest-related knowledge discussed in this Chapter; Draft recommendation 12: Provide incentives in Appendix 6 is the sub recommendation under the Draft recommendation 6: Build capacity and enhance incentives.

implement each recommendation often work together, so that implementing one step will help in the implementation of another step. To illustrate the likely relationships, the discussion of each recommendation is accompanied by a systems diagram.

After an introductory discussion of the rationale underlying each recommendation, the feedback provided by consultants about the feasibility of the recommendation is presented. This is followed by a comment by the researcher about whether the recommendation should be amended and how. Generally, those consulted provided feedback as overall comments on the complete set of recommendations, highlighting issues that should be changed or further emphasised in the recommendations. As a consequence, some of the recommendations below do not contain quotes of specific feedback from the consultants.

8.2.1. Draft Recommendation 1: Improve coordination among relevant authorities

This recommendation addresses the failings this study has found as a consequence of poor implementation of principal components relevant to Criteria 8: Coordination. Inconsistency between previous and existing government in the formulation of forest policy is a key problem, as discussed in several parts of thesis.[640] Thus new governments formulate forest policies without taking into account the policies of previous governments, even though they are workable and deal with the same issue. This results in significant variability and inconsistency in forest policy and contributes to difficulties for forest departments to implement the policies. Section 5.2.4 also highlights that the frequent changes to government policies and competition practices between agencies result in changes to some projects that have already been partly conducted and have had resources and time spent on them. These costs have an impact on the efficiency of Thailand's forest governance system (Criterion 6: Efficiency). Section 5.2.8 also highlighted that that the lack of common objectives (a component of Criterion 8: Coordination) contributes to conflict among stakeholders.

Inconsistency among agencies in the implementation of forest policy is also a significant problem. The Paper (Section 5.3) discussing the failure of forest governance in Thailand noted inconsistencies in the application of forest law between the LD, RFD, and DNWPC. The REDD+ Paper in Section 7.3.1 noted that in addition to inconsistencies between the LD, RFD, and DNWPC, there is also inconsistency and non-coordination between the central and local governments.

In summary, the discussion in previous chapters of this thesis indicates lack of coordination caused by: a lack of continuity of policies from elected governments; a lack of shared vision and strategic approach leading to inconsistent delineation of boundaries; complexity in application of laws,

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[640]section 3.3.4.4 of Chapter 3 in the Paper 'Country Report: Thailand- Recent Developments of Forest-Related Law-Plantation Act', and as indicated by several interviewees and literatures as discussed in section 5.2.6 and section 5.3 in the Paper ''A Systems Perspective on Forest Governance Failure in Thailand' of Chapter 5, section 6.4.5 of Chapter 6, and in section 7.3.1 in Paper 'REDD+ Implementation in Thailand – Legal and Institutional Challenges' of Chapter 7

inconsistency in dealing with landless people such as the provision of land title deeds; and competition between the government agencies to maximise their own goals.

To improve agency coordination would require a number of actions:

a) A first step would be to identify and detail the responsibilities of forest-related agencies in Thailand. This would help to reveal the degree of overlapping responsibilities, gaps and contradictions in agency responsibilities.[641] An additional benefit of carrying out in this step is that it would help to identify the fundamental laws and institution needed for the implementation of REDD+ in Thailand. As discussed in Section 7.3.1 in the Paper 'REDD+ implementation in Thailand – legal and institutional challenges', Thailand faces a number of challenges if it is to meet its obligations under REDD+.

b) Establishing both informal and formal communication avenues (such as regular meetings of leaders and staff of related authorities) to jointly review experiences of policy and law implementation, as has occurred to good effect in 20 states of the northern region in the United States (see Section 7.2). Steps (c) to (f) also mirror aspects of this US initiative.

c) Create a joint development agenda for forest governance that will provide a basis for resolving how factors that cause complexity, overlap (duplication of effort and of boundaries) and inconsistency are resolved.

d) Establish memorandums of agreement (MOA) in which relevant agencies jointly declare plans and policies, and enhance cooperation through linkages (for example linking with other government agencies who are implementing actions to protect soil and water, and improve agriculture). This should lead to clarification of responsibilities to eliminate overlaps and undue complexity in application of policies.

e) Share common databases for forest management, such as forest inventories and forest maps. This has been recognised by the Indonesian Government as vital to improve its forest governance efforts and implement REDD+.[642]

f) Create forest laws that promote coordination, (discussed in the Western Ghats Paper, see Section 7.2). Such laws would require interconnected authorities, such as those responsible for land management, watershed management, and forest management to coordinate in mapping or classifying forestlands, and sharing common information, such as forest inventory and statistic on deforestation.

Feedback from Consultants: There was general agreement with this recommendation and the steps for implementation. There were no particular comments.

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[641] Many of the details of these gaps and contradictions in agency responsibilities have already been highlighted in this thesis, but a more systematic and comprehensive analysis would be useful.

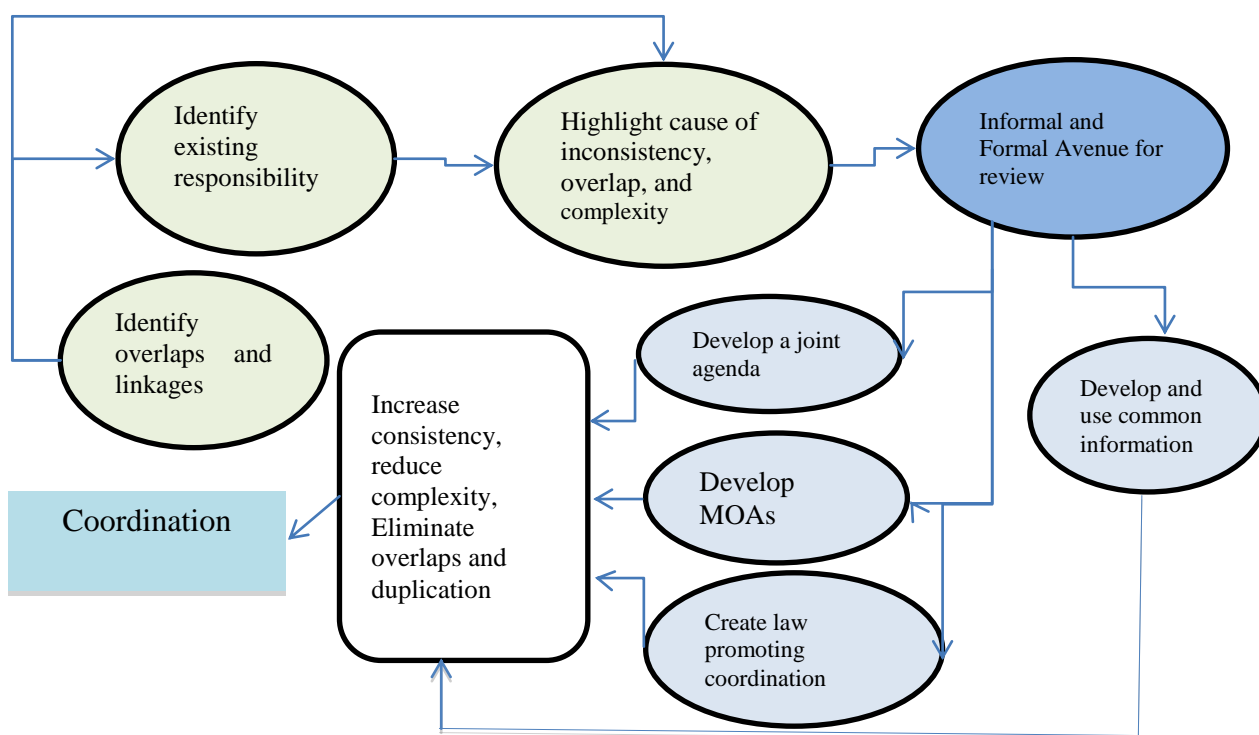[642]Korhonen-Kurki et al, above n 529, 96; Mulyani and Jepson, above n 431, 265-269.

Figure 8.1: Steps to improve coordination among relevant authorities

8.2.2. Draft recommendation 2: Reduce the number of overlapping, complex and conflicting laws

This recommendation addresses the failings this study has found relevant to Criterion 1: Rule of law and Criterion 6: Efficiency. Complexity and inconsistency of laws is a key problem, as discussed in several parts of the thesis.[643]

Forest areas can be designated under a number of laws administered by different authorities, thereby compromising consistency of approach and adding complexity of implementation. Laws have different definitions of what constitutes 'forestland', which confuses staff at the regional and local government levels, making it more difficult (complex) for them to carry out their role because they need to decide which law applies. Some laws are also inherently complex. These causes of complexity can lead to unintended increases in transactions costs and, therefore, affect the efficiency of implementation. Complexity can also enable corrupt activities. This risk was evidenced by interviewees highlighting the inequitable implementation of laws, strictly enforced on the community, including indigenous people, but not on wealthy people.

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[643] Section, section 5.2,1, section 5.3 in the Paper ''A Systems Perspective on Forest Governance Failure in Thailand', section 6.2.7 and 6.4.1.

There is inconsistency between the provisions of the *Constitution* and forest legalisation, though protection of the rights of indigenous people is not specifically covered by the *Constitution* because they lack Thai citizenship.

To summarise, there is a failure to meet the criterion of application of 'rule of law' because of: (1) complexity of laws (2) inconsistency between the provisions of the *Constitution* and of forest legislation (3) partial enforcement of laws to the disadvantage of indigenous people but to the benefit of influential people.

Ideally laws established should avoid complexity, inconsistency and overlaps as these can create costs for implementation and discourage people from complying with laws. The specific steps proposed to address these issues are:

a) Enhance coordination among relevant authorities, as per Recommendation 1. Good coordinating mechanisms will help to identify some underlying issues that cause the current forest governance system to be complex (duplication, inconsistency, poor linkages). In Nepal forests are managed as part of the land use system under one ministry, helping to reduce conflict of laws related to forest and land management.[644] This example was discussed in Appendix 4.

b) Create a provision within forest-related law for periodic review to identify where rules overlap and/or are contradictory, or are out-dated. Importantly forest-related law should be made consistent with the provisions of the *Constitution.*

c) Have a coherent forest-related policy as the guiding framework for all associated agencies (such as soils, water and agricultural authorities). Such a policy was adopted in Honduras (discussed in the Western Ghats Paper – see Section 7.2). The policy was developed by stakeholders from related areas of land management, including, soils, water, agriculture and wildlife ranking from the government and indigenous people.[645]

d) Set minimum and simplified standards for forest management in legislation. This has occurred in Gambia and requires a few rules about what cannot be done rather than lengthy prescriptions about what must be done. For example the harvesting guideline is based on canopy cover rather than calculations of allowable amounts for annual cuts, and the forest management plan is determined by participatory mapping and transect walks rather than by a detailed technical inventory[646] (discussed in the Western Ghats Paper – see Section 7.2).

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[644]Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (Nepal), 'Nepal Forestry Outlook Study' (Asia- Pacific Forestry Sector Outlook Study II- Working Paper No. APFSOS II/WP/2009/05, FAO, 2009) 9, 17; B.K. Singh and D.P. Chapagain, 'Trends in forest ownership, forest resources tenure and institutional arrangements: are they contributing to better forest management and poverty reduction?; Community and leasehold forestry for the poor: Nepal case study' in *Forestry Policy and Institutions Working Paper 14: Understanding forest tenure in South and Southeast Asia* (FAO, 2007) 115, 122.

[645]The World Bank, *Forests Sourcebook : Practical Guidance for Sustaining Forests in Development Cooperation* (The World Bank, 2008) 58.

[646]FAO, above n 138, 49, 59.

e) Minimise discretionary power by, for example, avoiding bureaucratic requirements that are difficult to monitor. As an illustration, small forest owners (areas of three to five hectares) in Bolivia and Guatemala do not require forest management plans[647](discussed in the Western Ghats Paper – see Section 7.2).

f) Use understandable language when drafting laws. For example the rules which support the forest management plans in Bhutan are written in the local language, which is easily understandable and short[648](discussed in the Western Ghats Paper – see Section 7.2).
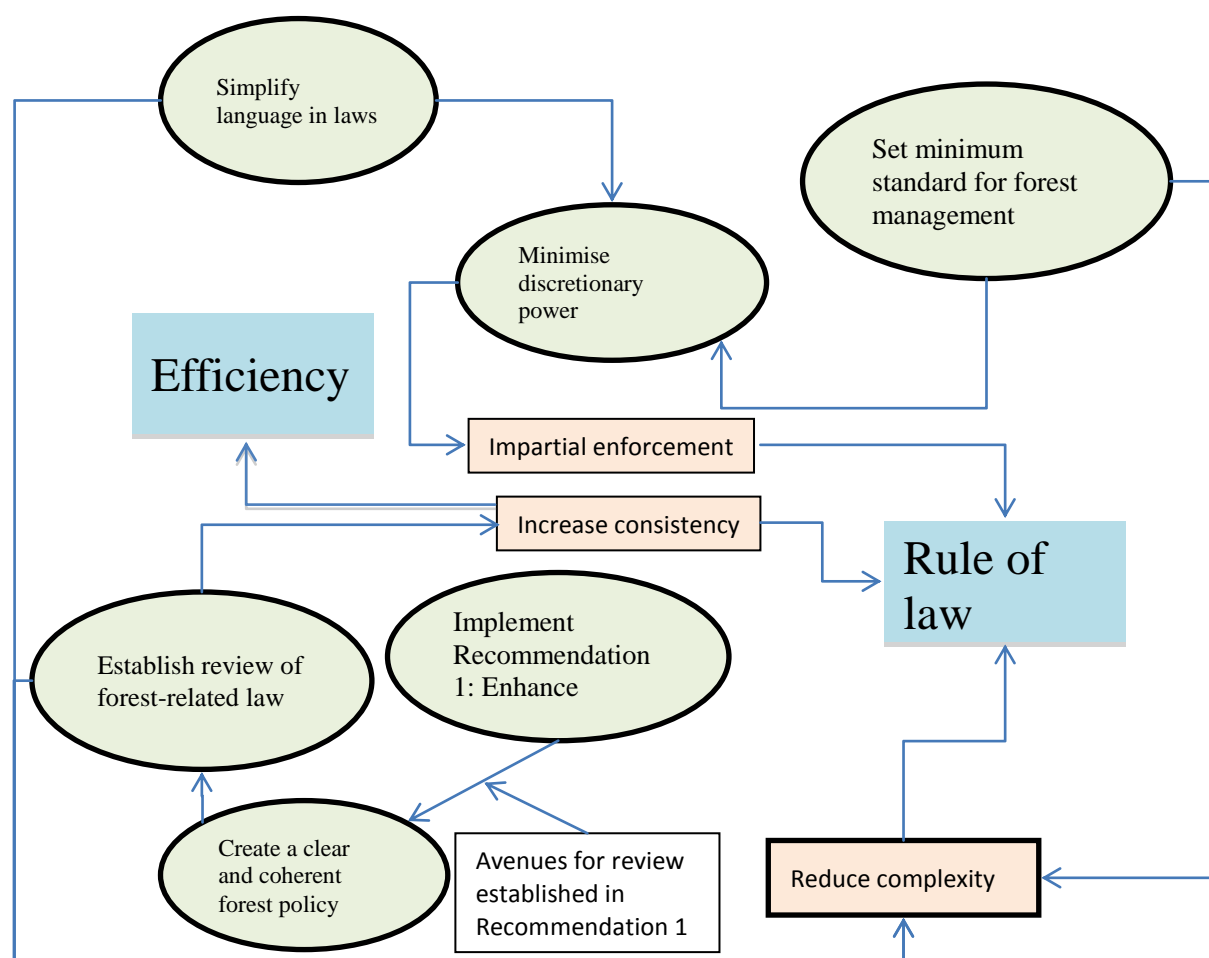

Figure 8.2: Steps to reduce complexity, increase consistency and impartial enforcement

Feedback from Consultants: There was general agreement with this recommendation and the steps for its implementation, and no specific comments about the separate items in the recommendation. Two consultants from the influencer category emphasised that complexity of laws is the problem.

> Yes, we should reduce the complexity of laws; and we should reduce unnecessary conditions.
> (*Consultant 9*)

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[647]FAO and ITTO, 'Best practices for improving law compliance in the forest sector' (Forestry Paper No. 145, FAO, 2005) 40.
[648]FAO, *Simpler Forest Management Plans for Participatory Forestry* (FAO, 2004), 14, 21.

I agree that complexity of laws is a concern, as it is very hard to follow, for example, I am working at the regional areas - sometimes we are not sure what laws to follow as there are a number of laws that are established separately by relevant authorities at the central levels. *(Consultant 10)*

8.2.3. Draft recommendation 3: Make transparency, accountability, and public participation a basis for reform.

This recommendation addresses failings as a consequence of poor implementation of principles relevant to: Criterion 2: Transparency; Criterion 3, Accountability; and Criterion 4: Stakeholder Participation.

Lack of transparency, accountability and stakeholder participation are significant problems in the forest governance system in Thailand, as discussed in several parts of the thesis.[649]This lack can foster a regime in which corruption is not controlled.

There is a lack of information sharing (communication), for example, in the case of land tax payments (the Por Bor Tor 5 instance). This instance illustrates the broader finding that the principal component of transparency 'dissemination of information' is not operating well.

A lack of involvement by forest communities in the formulation of forest policy, raises the risk that the forest policy that is formulated is inconsistent with the reality 'on ground'. These factors evidence that both stakeholder consultation and engagement are not working well in the forest governance system.

Lack of accountability impacts stakeholders, particularly poor people. Failures highlighted in the literature and interviews include: forestlands not being allocated to landless people according to the objectives of the law, but allocated to businessmen; government officials abusing their power to favour their own interests, such as using forged documents for issuing certificates of occupation rights, using a firm in which officials have an interest and collaborating with influential people to illegally log forests. Lack of accountability in hiring staff can lead to lack of proficient forest staff.

The Paper 'Country Report: Thailand – Recent Developments of Forest-Related Law – Plantation Act' (see Section 3.3.4.4) highlights that stakeholders affected by the *Forest Plantation Act* are not adequately considered by the amendments to the *Act*. There is no provision to involve the community or other stakeholders, who may be impacted by, for example, the establishment of lumber factories or forestry operations.

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[649]See in particular Section 3.3.4.4 in the Paper 'Country Report: Thailand- Recent Developments of Forest-Related Law-Plantation Act', section 5.3 in the Paper ''A Systems Perspective on Forest Governance Failure in Thailand', also, as revealed by interviewees in section 5.2.2, and section 6.4.2.

Lack of transparency, accountability and stakeholder participation can lead to corruption. In addition to corruption in land allocation, the Paper 'A Systems Perspective on Forest Governance Failure in Thailand' (see Section 5.3) notes that another form of corruption is bribery. A method for overcoming corruption is by increasing accountability and transparency. This can be aided by creating partnership between government and community, as the community can act as a watchdog to highlight corrupt activities.

To conclude, Thai forest governance appears to fail transparency, accountability and stakeholder participation standards for good forest governance because of: (1) a lack of information sharing (communication) or 'dissemination of information' (2) a lack of involvement by forest communities in the formulation of forest policy (3) a lack of accountability, particularly, in land allocation and hiring of staff. These issues affect poor people, forest cover and employment of proficient forest staff.

Steps that could be taken to implement Recommendation 3 to achieve transparency, accountability, and public participation a basis for reform are:

a) Enhance dissemination of forest-related information. This step was taken in Vietnam, Malawi, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Nepal. Disseminating information enables people to gain access to information on political issues, corruption, and religious issues for dealing with corruption, ensuring that the problems inquired by community are sorted out, and ensuring that everyone hears the same message about forest management in those countries. It was reported that, in Malawi, 70 per cent of broadcasted problems are resolved satisfactorily after they have been aired around the country[650] (see Section 7.2).

b) Foster public involvement, for example, by creating partnerships with community and social networks. Social mobilisation strengthens the power of the community to bargain their forest-related benefits. For example, the Association of Forest Communities of Pete'n in Guatemala and the Network of Forest User Group (CFUG) in Nepal are reported to have both been able to achieve better forest governance through this approach.[651] It was reported in 2009 that the deforestation rates in forestlands managed by the CFUGs of Nepal was 0.88 per cent, but the rate in forests administered by the government was approximately 1.5 per cent.[652]Involving stakeholders in forest management helps provide opportunities for working together and helps to build trust and collaboration. In Indonesia and Peru (discussed in the Appendix4) and in DRC, Tanzania, and Nepal (see Section 7.2), multi-stakeholder negotiations in forest management have been implemented. These approaches provide examples of positive

[650]FAO, 'Developing effective forest policy: A guide' (Forestry Paper 161, FAO, 2010) 57;Tuukka Castrén and Madhavi Pillai, *Forest Governance 2.0: A primer on ICTs and governance* (Program on Forests (PROFOR), 2011) 37, 38.

[651]Anne M Larson, Deborah Barry and Ganga Ram Dahal, *Forests for People : Community Rights and Forest Tenure Reform* (Earthscan, 2010) 123-126.

[652]Jeffrey Hatcher, 'Securing Tenure Rights and Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD): Costs and Lessons Learned' (Working Papers: No. 120/December 2009,The World Bank, 2009) 2.

outcomes of conflict resolution and trust building.[653] The Minister of Agriculture of Peru (2001) established a broad-based civil society and private sector stakeholder forum – later named the Roundtable for Forest Dialogue and Consensus (MDCF) –to work on a consensus basis to review and propose forest policy and legislation and to support the forest administration agency in achieving reform.[654]

c) Publish feedback from public consultations to ensure that inputs are acknowledged. Acknowledgement enhances transparency and provides stakeholders with confidence that their input is being considered.
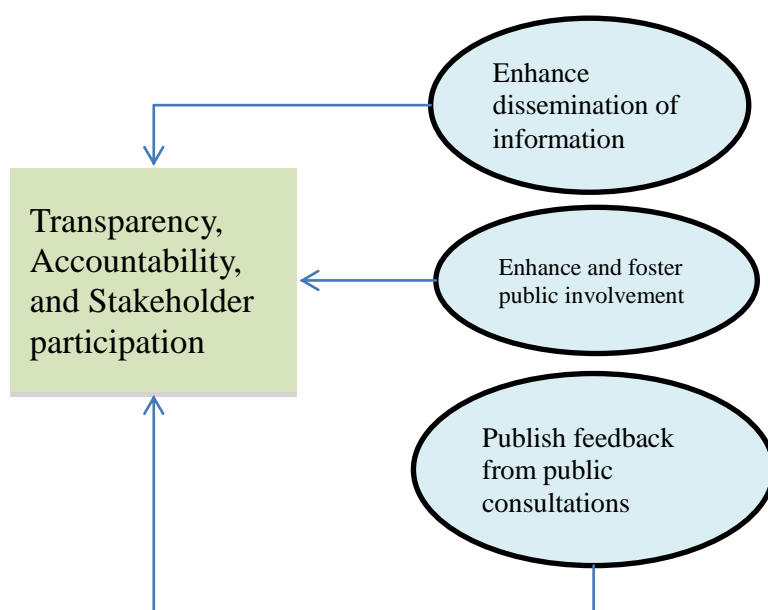
Figure 8.3: Steps to improve transparency, accountability and public participation

Feedback from Consultants: There was general agreement with this recommendation and the steps for implementation. Both groups of consultants agreed that the issue of trust was very important. Four consultants from the influencer group simply agreed that public participation is needed. Two consultants from the influencer group noted that establishing community networks could be a good reform step.

With reference to building trust, a consultant from the decision-making group observed:

Trust is important for forest management. We believe that government trusts communities to manage forests. As you can see from the community forest projects administered by the RFD, of which there are around eight thousand throughout the country, the government trusts communities

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[653]Julian Gonsalves et al (eds), *Practitioners' Notes for Localised Forest Management* (European Commission, United Nations Development Programme, Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture, 2008), 5-6, 18-20; Christy, above n 333, 107; Alison L. Hoare, *Community -Based Forest Management in the Democratic Republic of Congo: A Fairytale or a viable REDD Strategy?* (Forests Monitor: Rights, Research, Policies, People, 2010) 3-4; Razack B Lokina and Elizabeth J Z Robinson, 'Determinants of Successful Participatory Forest Management in Tanzania' (Policy Brief, Environment for Development (Tanzania), 2009) 4-5.
[654]Christy, above n 333, 107.

to manage forests. But it could be that other stakeholders do not trust that government trusts communities. So a solution for building trust among the parties is important. *(Researcher's note Consultant 1 to 8[655])*

The feedback provided by this group of consultants was consistent with the feedback provided by other consultants:

Forest management in Thailand, as I have experienced for a long time, has the problem that government does not trust the community. This is because there are still some communities that have failed to manage the forest. But at the same time, communities also do not trust government - they not trust each other. Thus, the most important thing for this problem is we should focus on public participation, we should encourage community to learn, and we should focus on decentralisation. (*Consultant 9*)

And:

Actually both government and community do not trust each other, because they don't talk. So every relevant sector should talk. So we need the mechanisms that enhance government and communities to consult, talk and to work together. *(Consultant 11)*

Public participation is essential

Public Participation was proposed as part of Recommendation 3, which Consultant 9 supported:

We should focus on public participation for forest management; we should have law that enables people to have genuine participation on forest management with government. *(Consultant 9)*

This was confirmed by Consultant 10:

Public participation is very important for forest governance. We can obtain more ideas from this and particularly at regional and local government levels; there is more chance for people to participate in forest management with government. *(Consultant 10)*

Consultant 12 paid particular attention to participation of indigenous people:

For management of natural resources, including forests, public participation is very important, involving people, particularly indigenous people, to manage forest with government can make them feel like they belong to forests and this helps to make them like to protect the forests. *(Consultant 12)*

I agree with your recommendation for public participation. To make it more effective, we need to change the attitude, by involving community in forest management, but it is quite difficult, as this is the issue of power. (*Consultant 13*)

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[655] As the decision-makers met as a group discussion the 'quotes' are notes distilled by the researcher.

Community network

Consultants generally agreed on the value of establishing community networks:

> We should encourage community to learn; we should focus on the decentralisation, and encourage community to form the community forest network. The law of community forest network (such as in Latin American countries) could help. *(Consultant 9)*

Consultant 11 stated:

> I have read through the whole set of the problems and their whole set of recommendations, it is good and interesting, I agree with you, particularly the issue of community network. It is interesting and Thailand could try -- this is successfully implemented in Nepal where I used to go for study visits, but in Thailand there is no law that recognises mobilisation of forest community network. *(Consultant 11)*

8.2.4.   Draft recommendation 4: Security of rights over resources

This recommendation addresses the failings relevant to Criterion 6: Efficiency and Criterion 7: Fairness and equity.

Secure rights can balance the power of forest management among stakeholders and can provide incentives to care for forests over the long term. As noted in Section 7.3.1, in the Paper 'REDD+ implementation in Thailand – legal and institutional challenges', secure rights are a significant incentive for people to invest in forest governance. Poor definition of stakeholder rights cause increases in individual and public costs: individuals incur costs because they need to struggle to maintain or gain access to forests, and the government incurs costs in trying to manage access to forests.

As discussed in several parts of the thesis,[656]there is a need to amend forest legislation to implement the provisions of the *Constitution*. No specific forest laws indicate what rights people have over forest resources. Diverse forms of rights over forest resources moderate the power of government. When people have rights, it gives them a source of power which they can exercise to protect their interests in forest management, enabling them to argue for fair and equitable access to forest resources.

Steps that could be taken to implement this recommendation are:

a) Clearly recognise in legislation, particularly forest-related Acts, the resource rights of stakeholder. This has occurred in Brazil, Bolivia, Nepal, India, and the Philippines as discussed in Appendix 4. These countries have the rights of stakeholders, particularly the forest community, recognised by legislation rather than as policy statements which can be

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[656] Section4.4 in the Paper 'Country Report: Thailand Recent Development in Forest Rights in Thailand', section 5.2.5, section5.3 in the Paper 'A Systems Perspective on Forest Governance Failure in Thailand', section 6.2, and section 7.3.1 in the Paper 'REDD+ implementation in Thailand – legal and institutional challenges'.

easily overturned or ignored. This delineation of rights to forests has reduced competing claims in Brazil and Nepal, as discussed in the Appendix4.

The rights that should be clearly specified are:

Access: the rights to enter forest areas and enjoy services provided by forests.

Harvest: the rights to collect and harvest forest products, such as mushrooms, herbs, food, firewood and timber. The right to harvest could be divided into rights to timber and non-timber forest products. Rights could be for subsistence or commercial purpose.

Management: the rights to regulate use and transform the resources, such as making decisions to invest in planting to restore forest areas (types of trees to be planted or what sorts of planting practice). Rights to manage would ensure that rights to participate of community are more secured, as per discussed in the Draft recommendation 3.

Exclusion: the right to determine who will have access rights – the authority to exclude outsiders, such as those who violate forest management rules and people from other forest communities.

Alienation: the rights to transfer part or all of the rights of management and exclusion to others – both individual and group.

Rights of division into primary and secondary rights: this allows the holders: rights to withdraw, access, manage forest resources, rights to exclude outsiders and rights to transfer forest rights to members of the relevant community; to grant secondary rights to outsiders, such as rights for grazing or for collecting fruits.

Right over different types of forestland: Rights to forest may also be rights over different types of forestlands, such as national forests, government-managed forests, protected forests, community forests, leasehold forests, religious forests and private forests. Subject to further investigation, people should only have rights over forest resources, but not rights over public lands.

Right of next generation: clearly recognising rights of next generation ensure that their rights are considered by forest governance.[657]

b) Provision for long-term rights has occurred in Bolivia, Nepal and Vietnam as discussed in the Appendix4. Forest rights granted in Bolivia and Nepal are consolidated with unlimited durations. The rights to forest concessions in Bolivia and the community leasehold forest

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[657] See Edella Schlager and Elinor Ostrom, 'Property-Rights Regimes and Natural Resources: A Conceptual Analysis' (1992) 68(3) *Land Economics* 249, 250-251;Elinor Ostrom and Edella Schlager, 'The Formation of Property Rights' in Susan Hanna, Carl Folke and Karl-Göran Mäler (eds), *Rights to nature: ecological, economic, cultural, and political principles of institutions for the environment* (Island Press, 1996) 127**,**131-132**;** RRI, above n 1, 15-21; Larson, Barry and Dahal, above n 651, 45.

granted to communities in Nepal) have 40-year terms but this is extendable.[658]Forest rights in Vietnam are strengthened with a renewable 50-year term.[659]

c) Require due process of law and compensation for the cancelation of rights. This is the case in Brazil, Bolivia, Nepal, the Philippine, China, and Vietnam (see Appendix 4). These countries ensure that forest rights cannot be taken away without due process of law and sufficient compensation.[660]

d) Establish an independent authority for the governance of rights. This has occurred in Brazil discussed in the Appendix 4.All forest rights in Brazil identify the responsible authority. The Chico Mendes Institute for the Conservation of Biodiversity (ICMBio) is in charge of implementing Extractive Reserves, Sustainable Development Reserves and National Forest.[661] The National Institute for Colonisation and Agrarian Reform (INCRA) administers forest rights under the Forest Settlement Projects, the Agro-extractive Settlement Projects, the Sustainable Development Projects, and the Quilombos communities.[662]
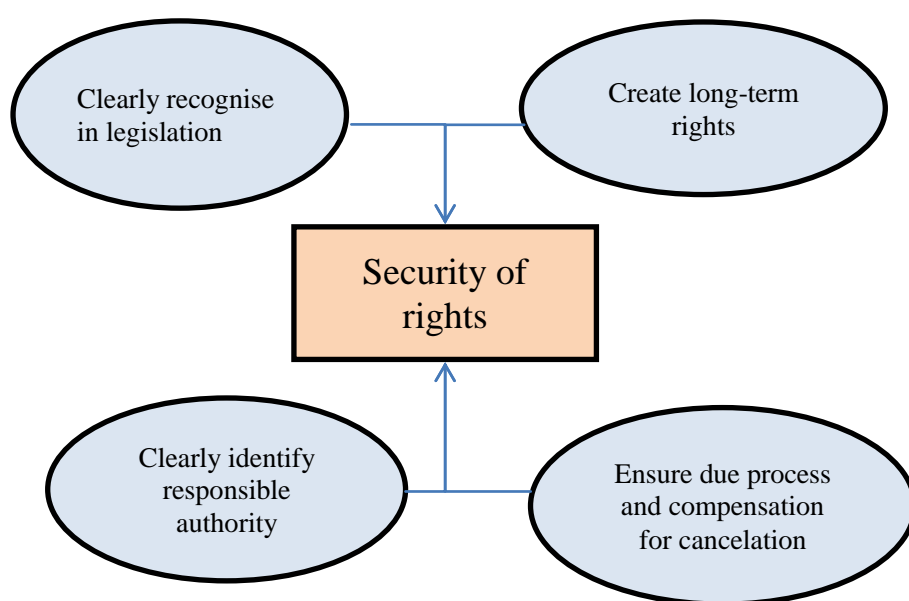

Figure 8.4: Steps to provide security of rights over forest resources

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[658]RRI, *Tenure Data - Bolivia* (2012) RRI <http://www.rightsandresources.org/documents/files/doc_4987.pdf >; RRI, *Tenure Data - Nepal* (2012) RRI <http://www.rightsandresources.org/documents/files/doc_5004.pdf>.

[659]RRI, *Tenure Data - Vietnam* (2012) RRI <http://www.rightsandresources.org/documents/files/doc_5012.pdf >.

[660]RRI, *Tenure Data - Brazil* (2012) RRI <http://www.rightsandresources.org/documents/files/doc_4988.pdf>; RRI, *Tenure Data – Bolivia,* above n 658*;*RRI, *Tenure Data - Nepal*, above n 658; *The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act* (The Philippines) s 3 (d), s 7 (d), s 8 (b), and s 62, and s 64 cited in Christy, above n 333; RRI, *Tenure Data - China* (2012) RRI <http://www.rightsandresources.org/documents/files/doc_4991.pdf>.;RRI, *Tenure Data - Vietnam*, above n 659.

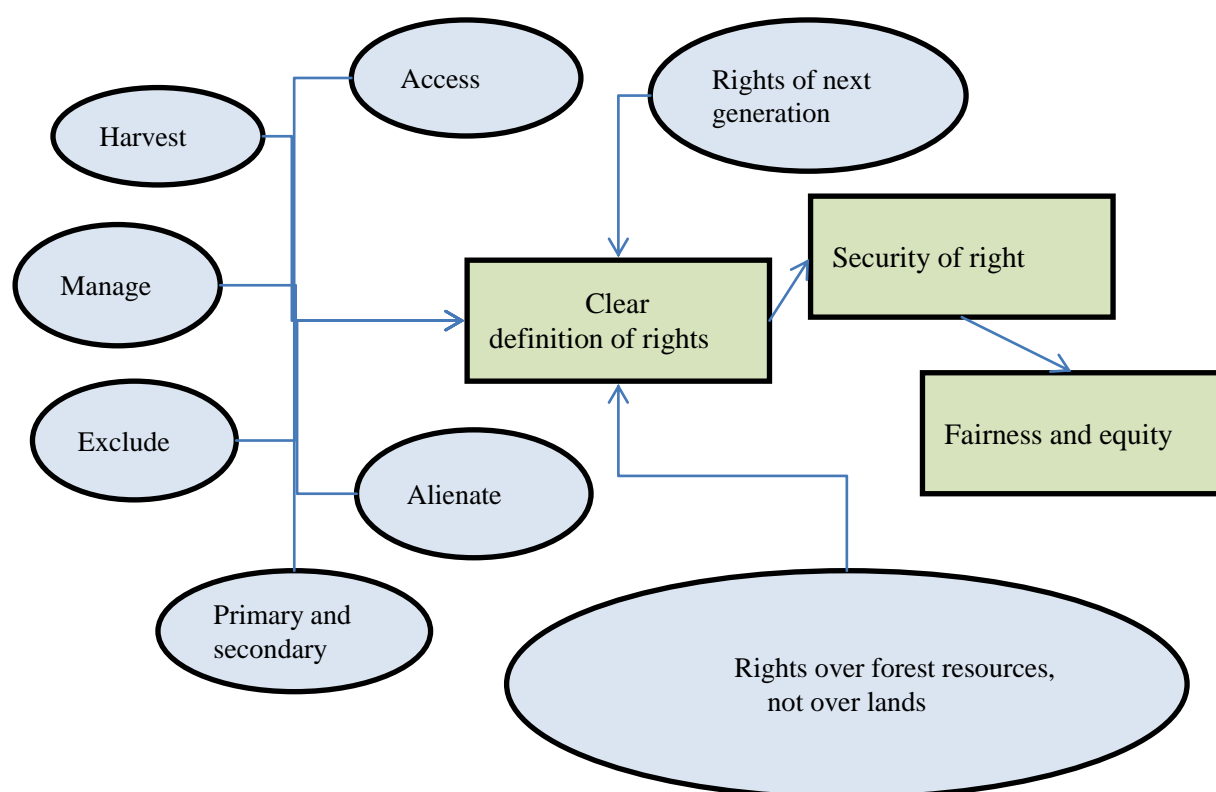[661]RRI, *Tenure Data – Brazil,* above 660*.*

[662]Ibid.

Figure 8.5: The components of rights over forest resources

Feedback from Consultants: The recommendation contained five steps for implementation. Consultants agreed with this recommendation and the steps for implementation, without objections. The Consultants from the decision makers group agreed that there should be compensation and secure rights, and such rights should be legislated.

> We agree with the recommendations you have proposed and particularly the recommendation for the issue of compensation for cancellation of rights which will be paid only when there is the unfair cancellation *(Researcher's note Consultant 1 to 8)*

> People could have secure right, but it should be under laws. *(Researcher's note Consultant 1 to 8)*

Four consultants from the influencers group agreed that transferable rights over forest resources to the community are needed. This issue was, in general, agreed to by all consultants:

> We should decentralise the power to community. Now even we have the law, but the law still depends on the state. The state doesn't want to really transfer rights of management to the community. The success of forest governance is the decisions made by community, not by state – the state only monitors, but not rules. We need to know what community needs. *(Consultant 9)*

Consultant 13 supported this statement:

> The state should accept the rights of the community. We even have a Constitution recognising the rights of the community, but we have no laws to implement the *Constitution*. *(Consultant 13)*

Consultant 10 noted:

> Granting or transferring rights to the community for managing forests means increasing the capacity of the country for forest management. It is time for government to accept and involve community to manage forest with government *(Consultant 10)*

Consultant 12 restated this issue:

> I agree with you that the government should accept or recognise the rights of people, particularly indigenous people. The government should accept the rights of indigenous people in natural resource management, including forest management such as swidden agriculture. If the government does not carefully study this kind of agriculture, it might be assumed that this kind of agriculture is an important cause of deforestation. Actually, the rights of indigenous people are not special rights than the rights of any other Thai population; it is only the ordinary rights that they should basically have – such as the rights about their culture for forest management. (*Consultant 12*)

Clear definition of rights

> We think that it needs to be made clear what rights to forest are. For example, rights to forests are related to two types of forests: the forest areas and the community forests. For the forest community – people have rights to forests under the *National Reserved Forest Act* administered by the RFD. We should make it clear about the rights to forests; we could have a list of property rights to forest, such as rights of ownership and the rights to manage forests. If we can do this, it can be clearer. *(Researcher's note Consultant 1 to 8)*

> Rights to forests in Thailand are not very clear. That's why people have different ideas about rights to forests and there are a number of interests related to forest resources, which people try to obtain. We need the cooperation of all stakeholders in Thailand. *(Consultant 9)*

> There are many interests related to forests – we need to make it clear about this – the recommendations you proposed could be helpful. *(Consultant 11)*

> The exact details of how rights of community to forest will be transferred – a clear list of rights of community to manage forests is needed. The *Constitution* no longer contains the term 'as indicated by laws', which seem to indicate the rights of community is protected by laws. Nevertheless, as long as there are not any specific laws made to exactly identify about granting rights to community in forest management, the power of decision-making on forest management still vests in the government, and community still has to ask for permission to utilise and access forests. So we need a clear list of rights. *(Consultant 13)*

Rights to forest should be separated from rights to land

This issued was restated by Consultant s1 to 8:

> Yes we agree that rights to forests have to be separated from forestlands. People cannot have ownership over forestland. (*Researcher's note Consultant 1 to 8*)

Finalisation of recommendation: Consultants from the decision-maker group specifically discussed the issues of compensation and secure rights. They did not disagree with the recommendation, believed that compensation and secure rights are possible, but suggested they have to be provided for in laws. Consultants agreed that devolution and clarification of rights are essential, but rights to forest should be clearly separated from rights to land.

8.2.5. Draft recommendation 5: Recognise traditional forest-related knowledge

This recommendation addresses the failings relevant to Criteria 7: Fairness and Equity.

Currently, the main focus of forest management in Thailand is forest conservation – the interests of forest dependant people are overlooked, as has been elaborated.[663]Such traditional forest-related knowledge is a significant part of their culture, and including traditional forest practice into forest management regimes could encourage greater involvement in forest management by these people.

Section 6.3.1.1 (b) notes that the government is reluctant to provide rights to indigenous communities who lack Thai citizenship. However, if a working relationship in managing forests is established, greater trust may result and the government may become more confident about providing such people with rights. In addition to the benefits that could be derived from establishing a better relationship with forest communities, implementation of this recommendation would also implement the provision in the *Constitution* that recognises traditional forest practices.[664]

Possible steps to implement Recommendation 5 include:

a) Explicitly protect indigenous people and their traditional forest related knowledge. Laws that empower and protect rights of indigenous people exist in Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, and the Philippines.[665] In addition to recognising indigenous people, Panama also provides protection for their Intellectual Property (IP).[666] These are discussed in the Appendix4.

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[663]Section 5.3 in the Paper 'A Systems Perspective on Forest Governance Failure in Thailand' and revealed by interviewees in section 5.2.5 and section 6.2.4.

[664] Section 4.4 in the Paper 'Country Report- Thailand- Recent Developments in Forestry Rights in Thailand, section 5.3 in the Paper 'A Systems Perspective on Forest Governance Failure in Thailand' and revealed by interviewees in section 5.2.5 and section 6.2.3.

[665]John A. Parrotta and Ronald L. Trosper (eds), *Traditional Forest-Related Knowledge: Sustaining Communities, Ecosystems and Biocultural Diversity* World Forests (Springer Science+Business Media B.V. , 1st ed, 2012) 113, 187, 580; Christy, above n 333, 14; Luisa Maffi and Ellen Woodley, *Biocultural Diversity Conservation : A Global Sourcebook* (Routledge, 2012), 179.

[666]Christy, above n 333, 14.

b) Create opportunities for traditional knowledge to be combined with scientific knowledge. This has successfully occurred in Argentina and Bolivia[667] (as discussed in the Appendix4).

c) Register all types of traditional forest related knowledge to help to enhance customary forest-related knowledge. This has occurred in India[668] (as discussed in the Appendix 4).

To encourage the sharing and use of traditional knowledge:

a) Incentives may be needed, including protection of traditional knowledge, to be used to encourage holders of traditional forest-related knowledge to cooperate in providing such knowledge. This has occurred in Russia[669](as discussed in the Appendix 4).

b) Include information about traditional forest-related knowledge in the syllabus of local schools.
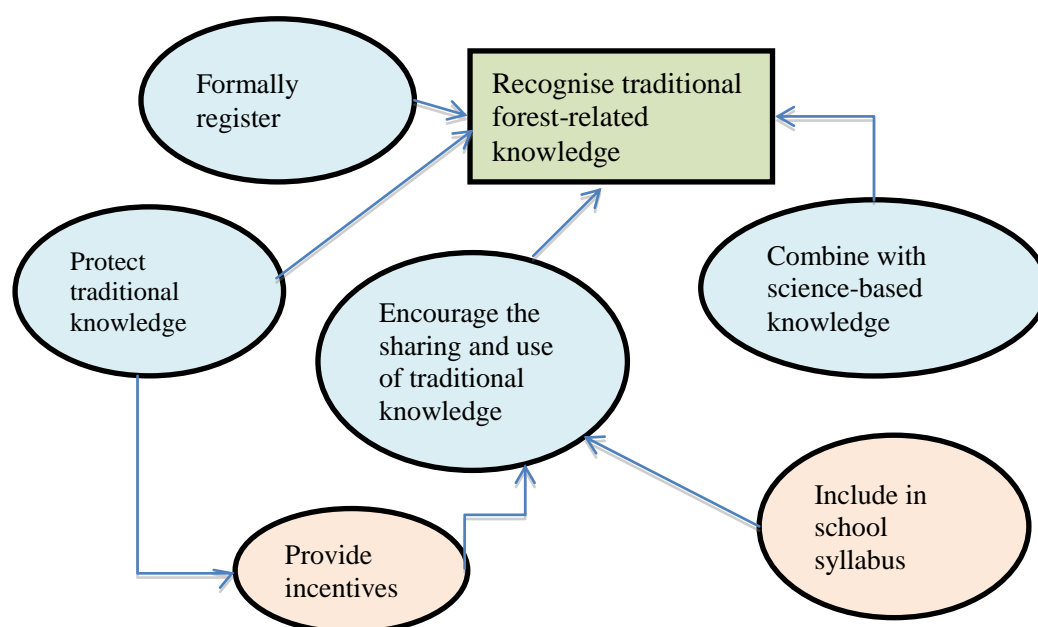

Figure 8.6: Steps to implement the recognition of traditional forest-related knowledge

Feedback from Consultants: Consultants from the decision maker group (Consultant 1 to 8) did not agree with protecting traditional forest-related knowledge with legal means such as Intellectual Property (IP). They noted that protecting customary forest practice as IP could create private property over the knowledge and this could inhibit effective forest governance in Thailand:

We agree with the recommendations you have proposed and particularly for recommendation for the issue of compensation for cancellation of rights, which will be paid only when there is the unfair cancellation. But for the issues of protecting traditional forest-related knowledge as intellectual property (IP), this might constrain effective forest management in Thailand, protecting

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[667]Parrotta and Trosper, above n 665, 97-99**.**
[668]Ibid, 580.
[669]Ibid, 579.

customary forest knowledge as IP could create private ownership making it quite hard for other people to use the knowledge. *(Researcher's note Consultant 1 to 8)*

Three consultants from the influencer group made the following comments:

> Divergent views among stakeholders happen everywhere, Thailand needs a solution to deal with such divergence … and protecting customary forest practice as intellectual property (IP) could be good for indigenous people, but maybe we cannot protect everything as IP. I agree with the rest of the steps for this recommendation. *(Consultants 9)*

> Actually, Thailand needs to implement all the recommendations you have proposed – but for the issue of protecting traditional forest-related knowledge as intellectual property (IP), it could be possible, but we should avoid saying the word 'intellectual property' as people may not understand. If we use the word 'intellectual property' this may not be suitable to the Thai context, because being protected as IP in Thailand we mean having private ownership over such knowledge – then it creates more obligations for other people who are not the owner. So the researcher should write the recommendation in a less extreme way. (*Consultant 13*)

And:

> I have already read through all details in the documents you provided to me. It is very interesting to me. It is very good and useful for Thailand. Only one issue I would like you to think about again – protecting traditional forest-related knowledge as intellectual property (IP). This issue is good – I agree with you, as I have heard about this issue that groups of indigenous people are fighting for this laws, but I am not too sure how we are going to protect the forest as IP. *(Consultant 11)*

Finalisation of the recommendation: Most of the steps under this recommendation are acceptable to the consultants. Their only concern was the nature of IP that should be recognised for traditional forest knowledge. They highlighted that it was important that IP property not constrain the use of forest-related-knowledge by the wider community. This suggests that whilst there is merit in instituting a regime for IP protection, laws and institutional arrangements protecting traditional forest-related knowledge should be carefully designed. Further detailed investigation of this aspect of the recommendations is required beyond the scope of this thesis. Knowledge that is used for managing forests in general, such as forest fire management or weed management, arguably should not be protected as IP.

8.2.6. Draft recommendation 6: Build capacity and enhance incentives

Capacity building and incentives are needed for forest governance in Thailand, as discussed in several sections in the thesis.[670]There are insufficient staff and funds to adequately carry out the work on forest management. There is also a lack of recognition that the community could be better used in voluntary partnerships to increase the resources of forest authorities. However, in order to establish partnerships, the community needs to know how they can participate in forest management. In other words, the capacity of the community to form partnerships needs to be enhanced.

Potential methods for building capacity and providing incentives include:

a) Create partnerships among stakeholders to share forest management work between government agencies and the community. To encourage participation in partnership schemes; methods could include:

- Provide incentives; these should be both financial and non-financial incentives, such as providing subsidies for carrying out work and granting more secure rights to forest resources (as already noted under Draft Recommendation 4).

- Ensure that the incentives provided for forest stewardship of natives forests are not less than rewards or compensation gained from commercial plantations.

b) Enhance training of both government and community stakeholders (disseminate information as stated in steps for implementation of Recommendation 3).

c) Implementing Recommendation 4: involving the next generation in forest management will help to build capacity in long-term, as has noted by the interviewees in section 5.2.5 and 6.2.5. This has occurred in North America (discussed in the Appendix4).

d) Continuously review compliance with international obligations, such as Agenda 21, the CBD, the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA), and the Aarhus Convention.[671].

e) Require effective information sharing (see Recommendation 3) to enable capacity building; genuine public participation; building trust and enabling genuine collaboration.

- Make information on forests affordable, easily accessible and accurate. Malawi, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Nepal use community radio, the Internet and mobile phone network to enable community to inquiry and share information about forest management (see Section 7.2).

- Create comfortable forums of exchange of information between community and government, such as informal face-to-face, small group discussions or sessions led by the head of the community.

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[670] Section5.2.7, section 5.3 in the Paper 'A Systems Perspective on Forest Governance Failure in Thailand', section 6.4.6, and Section 7.3 in the Paper 'REDD+ implementation in Thailand – legal and institutional challenges'.

[671]Mohlenkamp, abov en 339, ; UNEP, *Convention on Biological Diversity* (2011) UNEP <http://www.cbd.int/convention/about.shtml>.; UN, above n 338; Higman et al, above n 95,22-23;United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), *Aarhus Convention » About the Convention » Introduction* (2013) UNECE <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/introduction.html>.

- Use multi-stakeholder negotiations to reach consensus. This technique has been successfully used in Indonesia and Peru (Appendix 4) and in DRC, Tanzania, and Nepal (discussed in the Western Ghats Paper in Section 7.2). These approaches provide the positive outcomes of conflicts resolution and trust building among stakeholders.[672]
- Increase a common understanding of the objectives of laws and policies, and rights and benefits enshrined in legislation. In Vietnam authorities conducted a massive campaign to make people aware of the opportunities or benefits available to them as a result of the revised forest policy[673](discussed in the Western Ghats Paper-see Section 7.2).
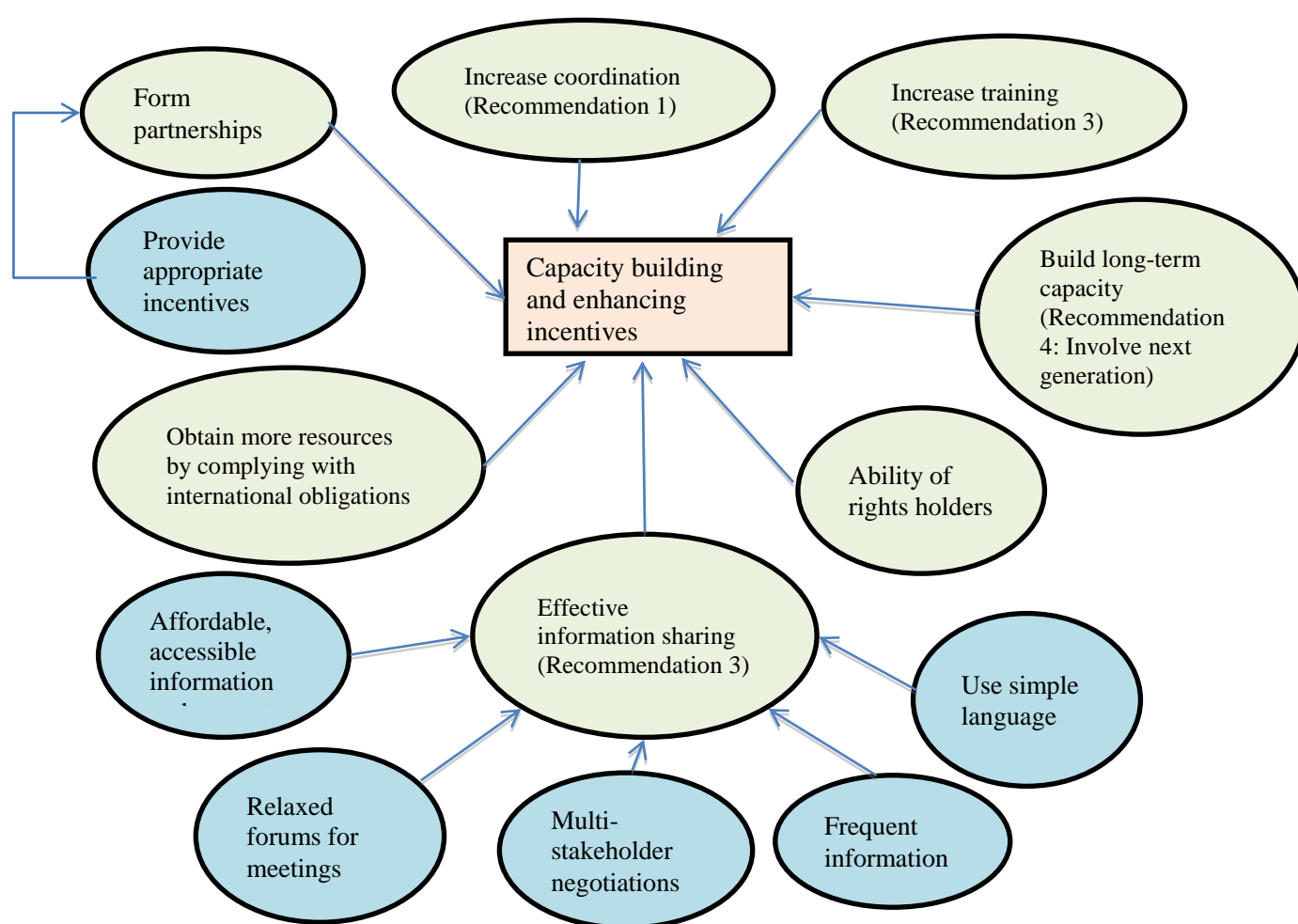

Figure 8.7: Steps to implement building capacity and enhancing incentives

Feedback from Consultants: The recommendation contains several steps for implementation. All Consultants generally agreed with this recommendation and the steps for implementation. There were

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[672]Christy, above n 333, 107; Hoare, above n 653,3-4; Lokina and Robinson, above n 653, 4-5.
[673] FAO, above n 650, 57.

no objections. The decision-makers group emphasised the issue of incentives, and the influencer group emphasised dissemination and capacity building.

Effective dissemination

> Training for effective communication skills are also important. *(Consultant 9)*

> Skill of communication is important, I agree. *(Consultant 10)*

> Yes the technique of communication is important for reforming forest governance in Thailand; it is clear that the information communicated by the leader of communities is more understandable for communities because the leader communicates in their local language, which is the language spoken by local people. *(Consultant 11)*

> In Thailand, even though we are a democracy, the real power of people is still not real. There is a need to communicate and make clear the rights of people – people need to understand better what their rights are under the Constitution. The community still needs supports from external operators and also from government, to enable the community to know about their rights and duties in forest management. *(Consultant 12)*

> Yes you are right for dealing with different ideas among stakeholders; we need to train people, particularly staff of government to have the skills to talk with people. *(Consultant 13)*

Incentives

> Having rights to forest is a significant incentive for communities to invest in forest management, so we should be focusing on providing incentives for them to invest in forest management. *(Researcher's note Consultant 1 to 8)*

8.2.7. Draft recommendation 7: Equitably distribute costs and benefits

This recommendation addresses failings relevant to Criterion 7: Fairness and equity.

Costs and benefits from forest governance should be equitably distributed among stakeholders. For example, involving the community in forest patrolling could help reduce government costs. Making compliance more affordable, such as reducing the requirements for establishing a community forest could help reduce the costs of compliance for the community.

Inequitable distribution of costs and benefits can occur when there is a lack of public participation. This has already been discussed above under the Draft Recommendations 3 and 6.

In terms of equitable benefit sharing, secure rights enable people to benefit from forest management. Section 6.3.2 discussed inequitable sharing of benefits.

Steps to implement Draft Recommendation 6 are:

a) Increase stakeholder participation (noted under Recommendation 3).

b) Reduce complexity of laws (noted under the Recommendation 2).

c) Increase secure rights over forest resources (noted under Recommendation 4).

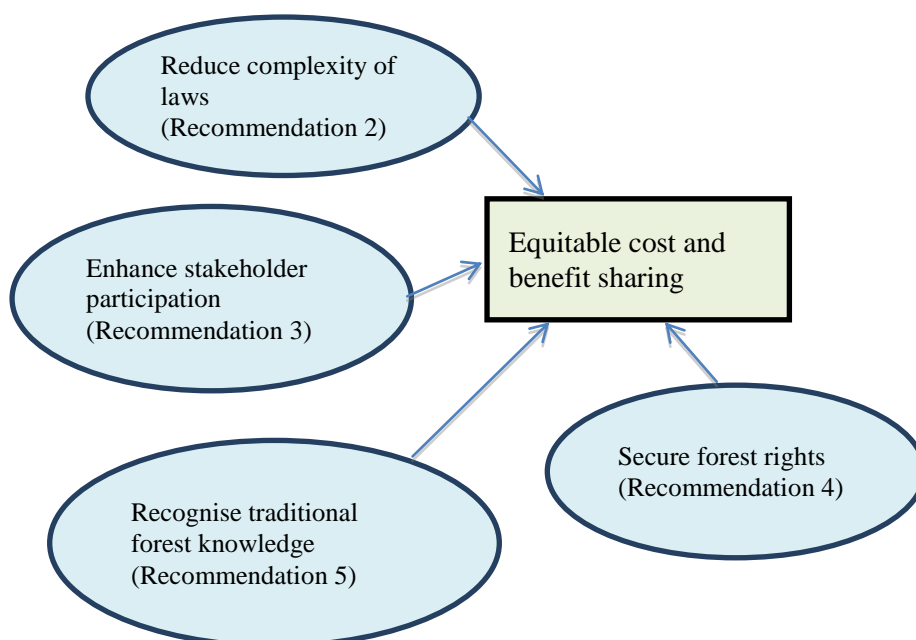d) Recognise traditional forest related knowledge (noted under the Recommendation 5).

Figure 8.8: Steps to implement equitably distributed costs and benefits

Feedback from Consultants: General agreement with this recommendation. There were no particular comments.

8.2.8. Draft recommendation 8: Promote strong relationships among communities

This recommendation addresses failings relevant to Criterion 10: Stakeholder Relationships.

Several sections of the thesis[674] provide examples of how effective forest management in Thailand is conducted by strong forest communities. At present, the governance system is strained because of lack of trust and inequitable sharing (noted above). The government believes that if communities are not cohesive and have strong leadership they will not care appropriately for the forest over which they are granted rights.

To promote strong communities, it is recommended to:

a) Enhance stakeholder participation (noted under Recommendation 3).

b) Provide training in forest management (addressed in Recommendation 3).

c) Effectively share information (noted in Recommendation 6).

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[674] Section 6.3.1.1 which the interviewees indicated that effective forest management is mostly conducted by a strong community and this section is evidenced by the literature in Chapter 3 section 3.3.4.1 revealing the case of Huew Kaew and Dong Na Tham Community that the members of communities have strong relationship and have been successfully managed forest.

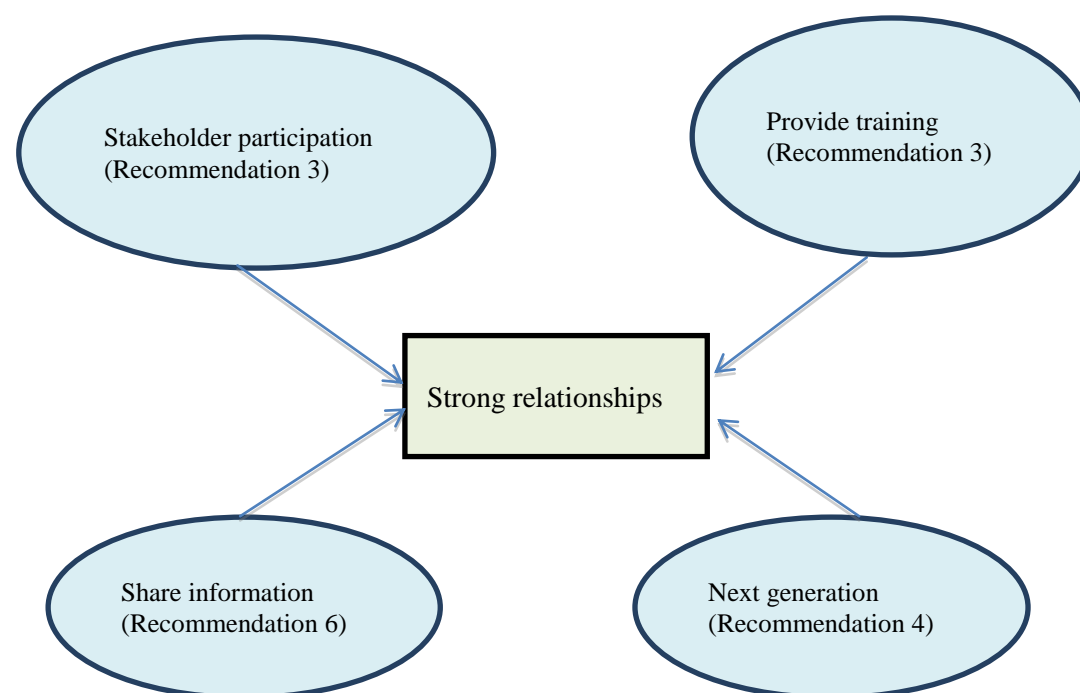d) Involve the next generation in forest management (as per Recommendation 4).

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   Stakeholder participation              Provide training
      (Recommendation 3)                 (Recommendation 3)


                        Strong relationships


    Share information                      Next generation
   (Recommendation 6)                     (Recommendation 4)
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Figure 8.9: Actions to implement promoting strong relationships among communities

Feedback from Consultants: There was general agreement with this recommendation and the steps for implementation. There were no particular comments.

8.2.9.   Draft recommendation 9: Reforming forest governance should take into account context

This recommendation addresses failings relevant to Criterion 10: Stakeholder relationships.

The recommendations for reform should not act against the values and belief system of the Thai people, which can lead to resistance and conflict among stakeholders. Conflict among stakeholders contributes to transaction costs of forest governance, which can contribute to governance failure.

Sections of this thesis[675] have discussed how some agency staff believe that providing community with access to forests and forest conservation are incompatible. As a consequence, debate surrounding the passing of a community forest law continues. From this research, I believe that the impose needs to be broken, and the traditional links between communities and the forests re-established.

Steps to implement Recommendation 9 are:

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[675]Section 3.3.4.1 of Chapter 3 and in Paper 'Country Report- Thailand- Recent Developments in Forestry Rights in Thailand' in section 4.4 of Chapter 4 regarding the case of drafting community forest law.

a) Increase stakeholder participation (noted under Recommendation 3).

b) Provide secure rights over forest resources (noted under Recommendation 4);

c) Recognise traditional forest-related knowledge (noted under Recommendation 5)

Implementing steps (a) to (c) would enable the community to express their needs for the government to take into account in developing the forest governance system.
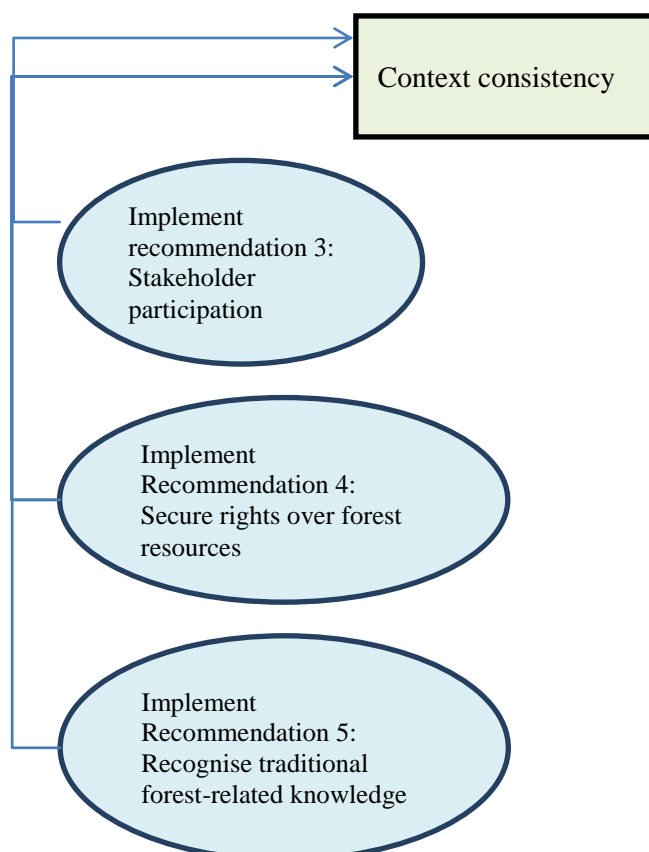

Figure 8.10: Actions to ensure that reforms take into account the context in which governance needs to operate

Feedback from Consultants: There was no objection from the Consultants. Two consultants from the influencer group specifically address this recommendation, noting that taking into account context in which governance arrangements need to operate is required:

> Yes, it is important (when reforming), to consider context consistency. *(Consultant 9)*

> Thailand should not only copy but should think if the ideas borrowed from other countries are consistent with the livelihoods of community. Thailand likes to copy concept from America and England, but forest governance in these countries is really different from Thailand. They believe that forest is timber sources that we can earn economic values from – not for community to live in. This is quite different from the Thai context, in which so many communities rely on forest and traditionally manage and live in forests. *(Consultant 10)*

8.2.10. Draft recommendation 10: Objective outcomes for strategies and policies

This recommendation addresses failings relevant to Criterion 5: Effectiveness, and Criterion 6: Efficiency.

Ensuring the goals of the forest laws and policies are being met in practice requires monitoring. Monitoring also includes feedback about whether resources are being used efficiently. In Thailand, monitoring is not carried out very well because of lack of capacity – see Section 6.4.3.

As discussed in several sections of the thesis,[676] forest legislation fails to implement the ideals of the *Constitution*. Forest laws are therefore out-dated giving exclusive power to the state and limiting public participation. Consequently, there 'effectiveness' of laws relative to the constitutional goal is compromised.

Monitoring of performance against objective is a key requirement in the implementation of forest governance – see Section 7.2.

This requires that:

- o The compliance monitoring process is conducted impartially.
- o An independent third party verifies and certifies the process of compliance monitoring.
- o Capacity is created and maintained see Recommendation 6: Capacity building and providing incentives.
- o Results of compliance monitoring are published to ensure transparency and accountability of the process.

Feedback from Consultants: There was general agreement with this recommendation and the steps for implementation. There were no particular comments.

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[676]The discussion in section 3.3.4.4 in the Paper 'Country Report: Thailand- Recent Developments of Forest-Related Law-Forest Plantation Act', the Paper 'Legal Arrangements for Forest Governance in Thailand: A critical review' included in Appendix 3, section 5.2.3, section 5.3 in the Paper 'A Systems Perspective on Forest Governance Failure in Thailand', in section 6.2.7 and 6.4.3.
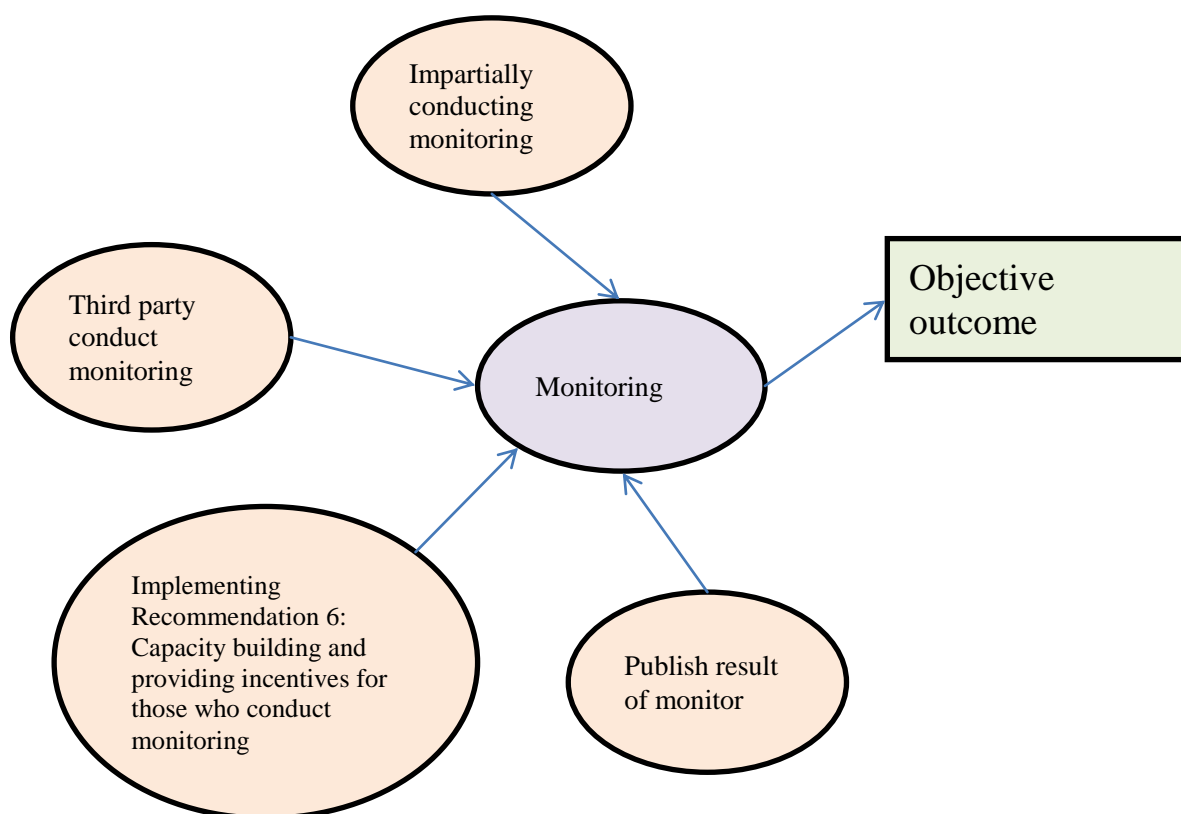
Figure 8.11: Steps to ensure effective outcomes

8.3. Conclusion

To achieve systematic improvement in forest governance, reforming the law is necessary but not sufficient. Successfully managing forest resources involves a complex system of interactions, some of which are highlighted in Figure 3.4. There are many interconnected factors. As systems theory highlights, changing one factor in a system may influence many other factors.

This Chapter encapsulates and expands upon reform directions for forest governance reform in Thailand discussed in the paper by Phromlah, 'Reforming Governance for Sustainable Forest Management in Thailand', reproduced in Appendix 5, and by Phromlah and Martin, 'REDD+ Implementation in Thailand' reproduced in Section 7.3.1. The lessons from these papers were recast by the researcher into 10 draft reform recommendations for Thailand reflecting the 10 criteria explained in Section 4.3 and summarised in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1. These recommendations were discussed with key stakeholders (Consultants) in the Thai forest governance system. Stakeholders generally agreed with the recommendation. The only the issue that appeared to cause significant concern was using IP to protect traditional forest-related knowledge. As a consequence, the draft recommendation was amended.

It should be reiterated that these recommendations are necessarily preliminary, with the field research and stakeholder interviews being limited by the scope and resources for a doctoral thesis. They are presented as a starting point for further dialogue.

What is clear from the data is that there is a need for fundamental system-wide reform of Thailand's forest governance system. While there is room for debate about the details of how this reform may be best achieved, this thesis demonstrates unambiguously that reforms of the type specified are essential if the public goods of forest governance in Thailand are to be achieved.

The following chapter provides a summary of this research and lists the final recommendations.

CHAPTER 9:   CONCLUSION

9.1.   Research question

The research discussed in this thesis was designed to respond to the question:

> **How can Thailand's forest governance system be reformed to help overcome identified forest governance deficiencies?**

Conducting this research is significant for a number of reasons:

1. Forest resources play a crucial role in Thai people's culture, their environment, and in the economic development of Thailand. Loss of these resources will be devastating to Thailand. In addition to the domestic impacts, destruction of forests is contributing to global climate change and to the increased incidence of natural disasters. This research adds to the stock of knowledge of how best to preserve Earth's forests. Developing proposals that are likely to be effective on how losses can be reduced is vital.

2. Well-functioning governance plays a key role in ensuring sustainable forest management. This thesis develops recommendations for reforming forest governance in Thailand to prevent further deforestation, and even to restore forests, to provide a system that more equitably shares the benefits of forest resources between the State and the community, and to increase resources that can be applied to forest governance though
   a. Establishing partnerships with the community
   b. Setting up the conditions for Thailand to participate in international programmes such as REDD+

3. This thesis contributes to the policy literature on good governance as well as to forest literature. It discusses the importance of providing property rights to forests for those who are dependent upon forest resources, such as indigenous forest communities in Thailand.

4. The thesis adds to the literature on natural resources law and management, and demonstrates the applicability of a mixed methods approach to research on legislative and governance reform. Previous research conducted on forest issues in Thailand focussed predominantly on a specific case study, an area or issue of forest governance in Thailand. Most of that research is also out-dated, conducted more than a decade ago. They employed a doctrinal method supplemented, in some cases, with questionnaire and interview surveys.

9.2.   Research design and conduct

The thesis employed engaged policy research design supported by systems analysis and doctrinal investigations using relevant issues to forest in Thailand and, more broadly, forest issues in other countries. The methodology of this research is explained in Chapter 3 and summarised here.

The research was conducted in a number of stages, with publications marking some of the findings at different stages. These publications have been integrated into the body of this thesis. The stages of the research are outlined below, noting that, to some degree, these were iterative:

1) **Finding the context and deriving the criteria**:

   This is predominantly the content of Chapters 3 and 4, which discusses the literature on forest governance in both Thailand and other countries. This step (Chapter 3) was to find the context of forest governance issues in Thailand and globally, and (Chapter 4) information on (a) the history and evolution of forest governance and (b) criteria for good forest governance against which to measure Thailand's forest governance system. The research indicated that ten criteria for good forest governance were most relevant with reference to Thailand:

   1. Rule of law
   2. Transparency
   3. Accountability
   4. Stakeholders Participation
   5. Effectiveness
   6. Efficiency
   7. Fairness and Equity
   8. Coordination
   9. Capacity building and Incentives
   10. Stakeholder Relationships

2) **Map relationships** found in data from literature and interviews, using systems thinking. The thesis contains a number of systems maps, including: one that shows the current forest governance system in Thailand (Figure 3.4), which helped the researcher to identify stakeholders and interrelationships of governance issues in Thailand; and maps that illustrate criteria and, particularly, the components making up the criteria relate to problem issues in Thailand's forest governance system.

3) Two sets of interviews were carried out to verify and add to findings in the literature review:

   (a) First interview set: The first set of interviews was carried out to verify the applicability of criteria on good forest governance found in the literature review (discussed in Chapter 4).

   (b) Second set of interviews: 'Test' (ground truth) findings and recommendations: Based on findings from the first set of interviews, the researcher derived a set of preliminary conclusions about proposed reforms. The viability of these was ground truthed in a second set of stakeholders. The findings are in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

4) **A Comparative study.** The failure of forest governance systems to protect forests is not unique to Thailand. By conducting a review of comparable experiences in other countries and also considering international expectation (such as REDD+) provided a basis for deriving feasible

solutions to problems issues confronting Thailand's forest governance system. The results of the comparative study are discussed in Chapter 8 and in Appendix 4.

5) **Finalising recommendations:** The final step of this thesis was to draw up a set of recommendations and check their feasibility with those who would be responsible for implementation or able to influence implementation.

9.3.   Research findings

The literature review showed that Thailand's forest governance system currently fails to be effective because: government agents currently have discretionary power for final approval which can lead to complexity and corruption; there are contradictions among forest-related laws and insufficient monitoring of whether the objectives of the laws are being implemented; and insufficient consideration of stakeholders which cause inefficiencies and conflict. These issues are discussed in three articles that have been published and are reproduced in full in Chapters 4 and 5, and Appendix 3.

Another published paper, 'REDD+ implementation in Thailand – legal and institutional challenges' reproduced in Section 7.3.1, uses findings from this research to discuss the challenges Thailand faces if the country is to implement REDD+.

Interviews carried out with stakeholders emphasised that Thailand's current forest governance systems fails to meet a number of components of the criteria for good forest governance:

1. Rule of law – Thai forest governance is complex, inconsistent, and only partially enforced.
2. There is a lack of transparency, lack of accountability and a lack of stakeholder participation – all factors that can lead to corruption.
3. Effectiveness of forest governance systems are compromised because of a lack of monitoring and lack of capacity
4. There are many inefficiencies because of frequent changes to government policies; poor competitive practices; and poor definition of stakeholder rights, which all cause increases in unintended costs.
5. Fairness and equity are compromised because a lack of; clear definition of forest rights; recognition of forest-related knowledge; inequitable sharing of benefits from forest resources; and poor involvement of the younger generation.
6. Coordination of objectives and strategies to guide forest governance is poor.
7. Capacity building and incentives are not well utilised.
8. Stakeholder relationships are often strained.

As a result of findings from the literature reviews and interviews, 10 recommendations, together with possible steps for implementation were put forward. These were discussed with stakeholders before being finalised (see Chapter 8). The following section lists the recommendations.

9.4. Final recommendations for forest governance reform in Thailand

According to the evaluation discussed in Chapter 8, this section finalises the set of reform proposal for forest governance in Thailand.

Recommendation 1: Improve coordination and consistency among relevant authorities

Steps to implement this recommendation are:

a) Identify and detail the responsibilities of forest-related agencies in Thailand to reveal overlapping responsibilities, gaps and contradictions in agency responsibilities;

b) Establish both informal and formal communication avenues (such as establishing regular meetings of leaders and staff of related authorities) to jointly review experiences of policy and law implementation.

c) Create a joint development agenda for forest governance that will provide a basis for resolving how factors that cause complexity, overlap (duplication of effort and of boundaries) and inconsistency are resolved.

d) Establish memorandums of agreement (MOA) in which relevant agencies can jointly declare plans and policies and enhance the cooperation through linkages.

e) Share common databases for forest management, such as forestry inventories and forest maps.

f) Create forest laws that promote coordination.

Recommendation 2: Reduce the number of overlapping, complex and conflicting laws

Steps to implement this recommendation are:

a) Enhance coordination among relevant authorities (as per Recommendation 1).

b) Create provisions within forest-related law for periodic review to identify where legislation overlaps and/or are contradictory with related legislation, or are out-dated. Importantly forest-related law should be made consistent with the provisions of the *Constitution.*

c) Have a clear and coherent forest-related policy as the guiding framework for all associated agencies (such as soils, water and agricultural authorities) to follow.

d) Set minimum and simplified standards for forest management in legislation.

e) Minimise discretionary power by, for example, avoiding cumbersome bureaucratic requirements that are difficult to monitor.

f) Use clear, simple and understandable language when drafting laws.

Recommendation 3: Make transparency, accountability, and public participation a basis for reform.

Steps that could be taken to implement this recommendation are:

(a) Enhance dissemination of forest-related information.

(b) Enhance and foster public involvement.

(c) Publish feedback from public consultations to ensure that inputs have been acknowledged.

Recommendation 4: Provide security of rights over resources

Steps that could be taken to implement this recommendation are:

a) Clearly recognise in legislation, particularly forest-related Acts, the resource rights of stakeholder. Rights should specify: *Access* to forests; *Harvest* rights; *Management* to improve resources; *Exclusion* of non-community members; *Alienation* – capacity to transfer rights; *primary and secondary rights*; *Right over different types of forestland*; *Right of next generation.*

b) Provide for long-term rights.

c) Require due process of law and compensation for the cancelation of rights.

d) Clearly identify a certain responsible authority for the governance of rights.

Recommendation 5: Recognise traditional forest-related knowledge

Steps to implement for recognising traditional forest-related knowledge include:

a) Explicitly protect indigenous people and their traditional forest- related knowledge. If providing IP, design laws and institutional arrangements to provide protection over knowledge that represents innovation or significant change, for example changing original forest products to medicinal ones.

b) Create opportunities for traditional forest management knowledge to be combined with modern scientific knowledge.

c) Register rights to help enhance customary forest-related knowledge.

d) To encourage the sharing and use of traditional knowledge:

- Incentives may be needed.
- Include traditional forest-related knowledge into the syllabus of local school.

Recommendation 6: Build capacity and enhance incentives

The steps for implementation of this recommendation are:

a) Create partnerships among stakeholders to share forest management work between government agencies and the community:

- Provide financial and non-financial incentives.

- Ensure that the incentives provided for forest stewardship or natives forests are not less than rewards or compensation gained from commercial plantation.

b) Enhance training of both government and community stakeholders (disseminate information as stated in steps for implementation of Recommendation 3).

c) Enhance the ability of right holders.

d) Involve the next generation in forest management.

e) Comply with international obligations.

f) Promote coordination among authorities.

g) Require effective information sharing (see Recommendation 3).

- Make information on forests affordable, easily accessible and accurate. Affordable methods of information-sharing could include utilising available media – such as community radio, the internet and mobile phone network

- Create a relaxed forum for exchange of information between community and government.

- Use multi-stakeholder negotiations to reach consensus among stakeholders.

- Use understandable and simple language to communicate information about forests as suggested by the interviewees.

- Enhance the probability for a common understanding regarding the objectives of laws and policies, and the rights and benefits enshrined in legislation by providing such information frequently.

Recommendation 7: Equitably distribute costs and benefits

Steps to implement this recommendation are:

a) Increase stakeholder participation (as noted under Recommendation 3).

b) Reduce complexity of laws (as noted under the Recommendation 2).

c) Increase secure rights over forest resources (as noted under Recommendation 4).

d) Recognise traditional forest- related knowledge (as noted under the Recommendation 5).

Recommendation 8: Promote strong relationships among communities

Steps to implement this recommendation are:

a) Enhance stakeholder participation. As already noted under Recommendation 3, this is key to providing opportunities to allow strong relationships to gradually develop.

b) Provide training in forest management, as in Recommendation 3.

c) Effectively share information, as noted in Recommendation 6.

d) Involve the next generation in forest management, as in Recommendation 4. This also helps to build capacity in the long-term and enhance strong relationships among communities, particularly between young people and older people.

Recommendation 9: Reforming forest governance should take into account the context in which governance arrangements need to operate

Steps to implement this recommendation:

    a) Increase stakeholder participation (noted under Recommendation 3).

    b) Provide secure rights over forest resources (noted under Recommendation 4);

    c) Recognise traditional forest-related knowledge (noted under Recommendation 5)

Recommendation 10: Set objective outcomes for strategies and policies

Steps to implement effective outcomes:

   Require monitoring of compliance with laws, ensuring that:

- The compliance monitoring process is conducted impartially.

- An independent third party verifies and certifies the process of compliance monitoring.

- Implement Recommendation 6: Capacity building and providing incentives.

- Publish results of compliance monitoring to ensure transparency and accountability of the process.

9.5. Limitations of the research

A significant limitation in this research was the small stakeholder sample sizes, which may compromise the generalisability of results. Ten stakeholders participated in the first set of interviews and 17 in the second set. This limitation, however, was minimised by utilising the mixed methods approach, which enabled comparisons (triangulation) of results. Basically, results from the literature review on Thailand and comparisons with issues with other countries corroborated findings from the interviews.

Another limitation is the depth of research on comparator countries. More in-depth studies of the problems and solutions faced by comparator countries may have revealed issues and recommendations for action that could be applied to the Thai situation. However, time constraints precluded a more in-depth analysis. The consultations with stakeholders, who were chosen because of their expertise, were the method chosen to overcome this possible limitation. Consultations with these experts did not indicate that significant issues that should have been part of the recommendations were lacking.

A further possible limitation to the generalisability of findings to Thailand's forest governance issues is that this thesis was focused predominantly upon forest governance issues confronting inland areas of Thailand (mostly in the North, the West, and the Northeast of Thailand) not along the coastal area (typically it is the mangrove in the South of Thailand). However, most of forestlands in Thailand are

in the North, the West, and the Northeast, with only a few of forest areas along the coastline (accounting for approximately 0.99 per cent of total forest areas of the country).[677]

9.6.   The potential for future research

The discussion in this thesis raises a number of possible research agendas:

1. *How can laws and institutions enhance effective self-governance for communities whose rights are granted?*

Granting rights to forest resources to communities could be an opportunity to enable communities to participate in forest governance with government. However, a question is whether granting rights should also include security of rights over the long term, and security of rights in a collective form – that is for the community to hold rights or as individuals.

2. *How could a 'partnered governance' model be created to assure a community's involvement, whilst accommodating the legitimate interests of disadvantaged people, particularly the poor and women, in forest governance in Thailand?*

As demonstrated from interviews and the literature review, communities play a key role and have traditional forest-related knowledge to manage forest. These can be utilised in partnerships with the government. A 'partnered governance' model with forest communities will require improvements in the legal arrangements for community involvement in the use and management of forests. This model of governance is worthwhile for further studies for development of forest governance in Thailand.

3. *What types of traditional forest related knowledge should be protected as Intellectual Property (IP)*

Laws relating to IP might be a basis for strengthening protection and recovery of the value of people's traditional knowledge used to protect and sustainably exploit forests. However, existing IP rules are weak in the protection that they can provide for customary intellectual products and traditional practices. Having law recognise traditional forest-related knowledge is a start, but it is clear that the protection and recognition of customary knowledge and interests falls well short of what is needed to ensure sustainable and equitable forest governance, insofar as the interests of forest communities are concerned.

Forest property right reform is a learning process. It requires an adaptive approach to gradually and continuously identify changes that can be useful for supporting reform. It would be worthwhile to carry out further research on what types of traditional forest-related knowledge should be protected as intellectual property (IP), while ensuring social justice and forest conservation. The outcomes of this could be useful to increase decision-makers' confidence in the reforms' effectiveness.

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[677]Royal Forest Department (Thailand), *The statistic of Forest Area between 1961 and 2008* (2011) Royal Forest Department (Thailand) <http://web2.forest.go.th/stat/stat50/TAB1.htm>; Royal Forest Department (Thailand), *The statistic of Coastal Forest Area between 1961 and 2008 in Thailand* (2011) Royal Forest Department (Thailand) <http://www.forest.go.th/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=323>.

4. *How could rights be effectively applied for ensuring good governance of other types of natural resources in Thailand?*

This research focuses on property rights to forest resources and implies a number of possibilities to achieve good governance for this kind of resource. However, Thailand has other natural resources that need effective management, such as governance of water resources. Thus, it would be worthwhile to consider an extension of this thesis to include other natural resources governance issues.

5. *How could land-use change law and policy be designed to ensure good landscape governance?*

Reforming forest governance should be incorporated into reforming land use management system in general. Mismanagement of the range of land uses can be a significant indirect cause of deforestation. This could influence programs, such as the successful implementation of REDD+. Thus, it is worth for Thailand to conduct further research into effective land-use change law and policy.

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