

Men from the Massaha local community in Gabon. If Not Us Then Who?, 2024.

Annex 2

Advancing collective rights and livelihoods: a baseline assessment of enabling policy conditions in six countries

This annex presents the baseline results for each of the six study countries: Brazil, Colombia, the DRC, Indonesia, Nepal, and Peru. The profiles were prepared by the national research partners with the University of Notre Dame team and are the country-level evidence behind the comparative findings in the main report. Each profile has four sections. The "Context" section summarizes the forest estate, the tenure framework for Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities, and the political setting, as of October 2026. "Data Collection" describes the key informants interviewed in the country, their sectors, and the regions they know. The "Results" sections present the indicators by policy domain, pairing the numbers with what informants said about them. "Summary and Policy Implications" sections draw out the conditions that matter most for collective livelihoods in that country and the topics informants said the framework does not yet capture.



The profiles use the three values introduced in Section 3 of the main report. The national value is what a published national statistic reports for the country as a whole. The localized estimate is the value informants judged to apply to Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities in forest territories, obtained by converting their category responses into a percentage adjustment to the national value. The national reference level, called the "acceptable level" in the profiles, is the average level of government performance that informants in that country considered acceptable. Where a profile says that an indicator "falls from" one value to another, it is comparing the national value with the localized estimate; where it says an indicator is "short of the acceptable level," it is comparing the localized estimate

with the national reference level. Indonesia is the exception: its informants answered the question on acceptable performance as a question about current performance, so Indonesia's localized estimates are compared with the cross-country reference level, the average of the national reference levels of the other five countries. The ten indicators measured in law or as tenure area (legal recognition; the bundle of rights; self rule; grievance mechanisms; collateral; the right to water; free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC); official languages; and shares of forest and land under community tenure) have national values only and are reported in the text of each domain.

Readers should use caution when interpreting these data. The localized estimates are structured judgments by 30 or more informants per country, anchored in published statistics; they are not survey measurements of community members, and the response scale could not register differences larger than 20 percent, so where conditions in forest territories differ by more than that, the difference is understated. Several indicators are proxies drawn from existing datasets (firms' confidence in the courts for access to justice, loan approvals for applicants for accessing finance, trust in the national congress and political institutions). The profiles note where informants said a proxy misses communities' experience. And the profiles describe conditions, not what caused them. The qualitative material from the interviews, reported with the numbers, contains the informants' explanations.

The spider chart in each profile shows the 13 quantitative indicators for that country on a common 0–100 scale, so a reader can see at a glance where the country's forest territories stand across the five domains. The charts are drawn the same way for all six countries and use the cross-country reference level rather than each country's own, so that the six charts can be compared with one another. Each profile uses the national reference level where one exists. The key below explains the chart.

Reading the Spider Chart

Each wedge is one of the 13 quantitative indicators. Its length is the localized estimate for forest territories, on a scale of 0 to 100, where 100 is the best possible performance: every indicator is oriented so that a longer wedge means a better condition (for example, the “services without bribery” wedge shows the share of people who did not have to pay a bribe).

Wedge colors mark the five policy domains: red, infrastructure and connectivity (safe drinking water, mobile network access, trust in the legal system, freedom from violent conflict); yellow, livelihood development and capacity building (business climate, loan approval rate, adult and vocational training); green, institutional autonomy and accountability (anti-corruption measures, trust in political institutions); blue, inclusive governance and cultural respect (freedom from lethal attacks on community activists, inclusion in decision-making); purple, tenure security (property-rights security).

The grey line with points is the cross-country reference level: the average of the levels that informants in Brazil, Colombia, the DRC, Nepal, and Peru consider acceptable, used in the charts for all six countries for comparison. Where a wedge falls inside the line, forest territories fall short of that level; where it reaches or passes the line, they meet it. The dashed rings mark 20-point intervals.

National values are not on the chart; they are provided in the text of each profile, where each indicator is also compared with the country’s own acceptable level. Freedom from lethal attacks is a relative score with its reference level set at 100 to make it comparable to the other indicators.

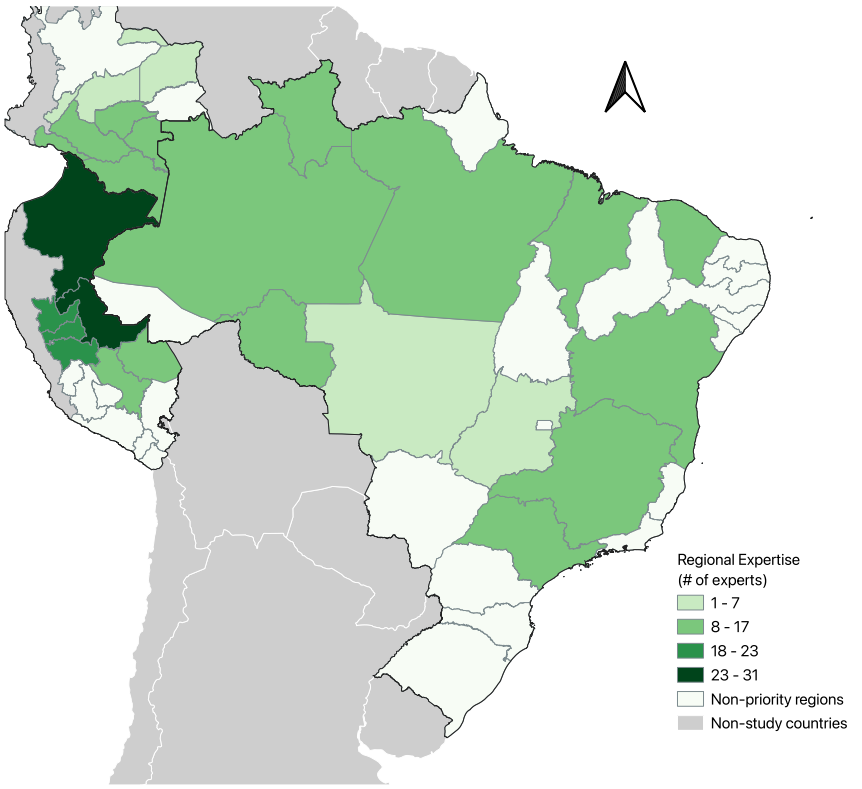


BRAZIL

Indigenous Pygmy peoples in the DRC harvesting crops and wood. EnviroNews RDC, 2024

Context

Brazil holds the world's largest tropical forest estate, roughly 430 million hectares or about 51 percent of national territory, across the Amazon, Cerrado, Atlantic Forest, Caatinga, and Pantanal. These forests are home to 391 Indigenous Peoples (about 1.7 million people), Quilombola (Afro-descendant) communities, and traditional user groups such as rubber tappers, river-dwellers, and babassu-nut breakers who depend on forest goods and services. Since 2023, Amazon deforestation has fallen to its lowest level since 2014, but degradation, driven largely by fire, has risen, and cattle ranching, soy, illegal gold mining, and roads continue to drive forest loss.



Brazil's tenure framework for forest communities rests on three main regimes: Indigenous Lands, which are demarcated through a multi-stage federal process; Quilombola Territories, which are recognized by the Constitution and regulated under a 2003 decree; and use-and-management instruments—such as extractive reserves, sustainable development reserves, and agro-extractivist settlement projects—that support smallholders but confer less self-rule. About 108 million hectares (13 percent of national territory) are formally owned by communities and a another 41 million hectares are designated. Since 2023, the federal government has approved more than 800,000 hectares of new Indigenous lands. The "marco temporal" doctrine, which limited Indigenous land recognition to territories occupied in 1988, was enacted in 2023, and struck down by the Supreme Court in January 2026. A Ministry of Indigenous Peoples was created in 2023.

Illegal mining and violence against environmental defenders threaten many forest communities: Brazil was the world's second-deadliest country for defenders in 2025, with 26 killings, more than double the 2024 toll.

Jurisdictional carbon markets are expanding, including a $180 million forest-carbon agreement in Pará, but face lawsuits and opposition from Indigenous and Quilombola communities over consultation and benefit-sharing, and late 2025 saw a rollback of mandatory consultation protections.

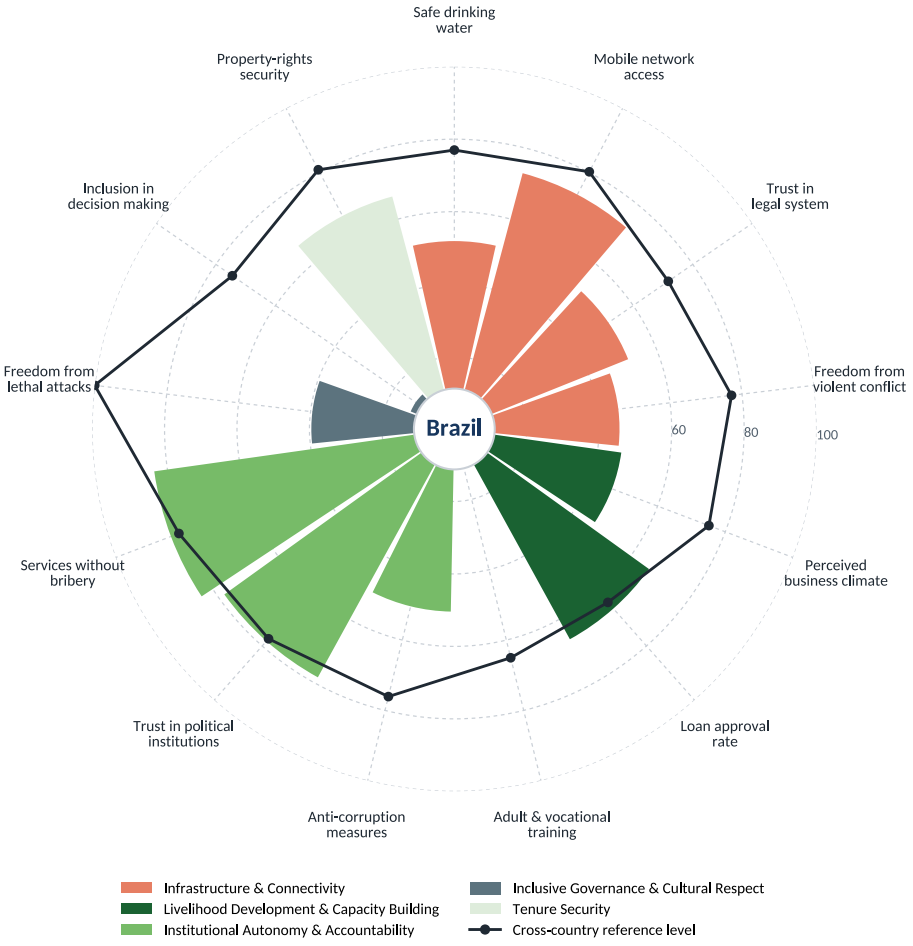


Figure 2. Spider chart comparing localized indicators (colored wedges) for the five policy domains to a cross-country reference level (black points)

Brazil is highly polarized, and changes of government swing environmental policy and community rights sharply. President Lula da Silva has reversed the previous administration's rollbacks but faces a Congress in which the agribusiness caucus has repeatedly overridden his vetoes.

Data Collection

The Brazil estimates draw from 30 key informants—of whom 70 percent are women and 30 percent are men—across six sectors: civil society (37 percent of respondents), researchers and academia (20 percent), private sector (20 percent), government (13 percent), grassroots and community representatives (7 percent) and "other" (3 percent).

Results

Domain 1:
Infrastructure and Connectivity

The Constitution guarantees a right to water, but national figures, dominated by urban and wealthier regions, overstate what that right delivers in forest areas. Access to safely managed drinking water falls from a national value of 62 percent to a localized estimate of 52 percent. Freedom from violent conflict falls from 57 percent nationally to 46 percent for forest territories, well short of the acceptable level.



A circle of workers cracking babaçu coconuts for production. Davie Melo.

Domain 2:
Livelihood Development and Capacity Building

None of the eight community-based tenure regimes examined —extractive reserves, sustainable development reserves, national forests, agro-extractivist settlement projects, sustainable development projects, Indigenous Lands, and Quilombola Lands— allow collective tenure rights to be used as loan collateral, which informants described as a structural barrier to community lending. The loan approval rate shows the domain's largest difference from the national value, falling from 81 to 66 percent. Access to capacity building is the domain's most severe shortfall: a localized estimate of 6 percent sits just below an already low national rate of 7 percent and far below the acceptable level.

Domain 3:
Institutional Autonomy & Accountability

Legal recognition of self-rule or customary governance covers only two of the eight tenure regimes examined, Quilombola Territories and Indigenous Lands, the narrowest pattern in the study. Anti-corruption performance falls from a national value of 60 percent to a localized estimate of 50 percent; informants linked this to "hybrid governance" in parts of the Amazon, where criminal networks coexist with, and in places override, state authority, with severe effects on Indigenous and Quilombola communities. Trust in political institutions is nearly equivalent at the national and localized levels (79 and 78 percent, respectively).

Domain 4:
Inclusive Governance & Cultural Respect

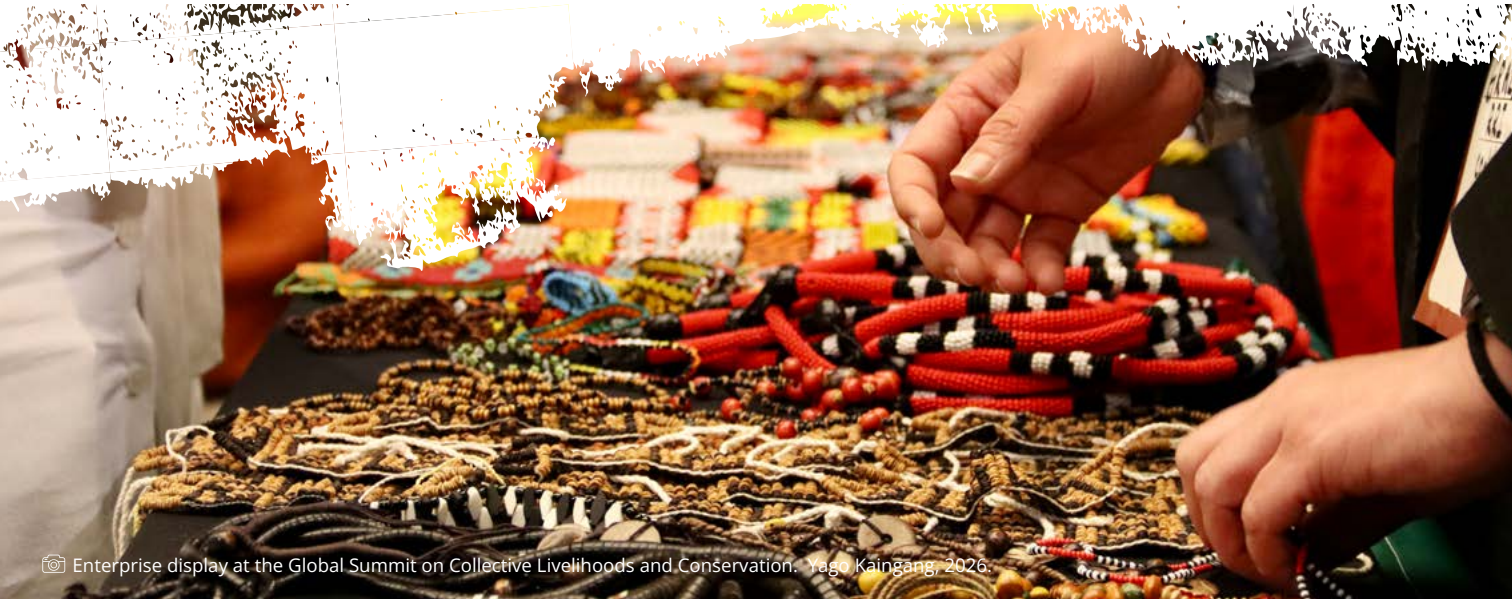
FPIC standards are recognized in law for Indigenous Peoples and Quilombolas but not clearly for other collective tenure holders. Brazil's 413 land and environmental defenders killed or disappeared between 2012 and 2024 represents the second-highest total among the six countries, and most informants judged attacks to be more frequent for forest communities than the national count implies. Rural marginalization or exclusion from decision-making falls from a national value of 15 to a localized 13, both far below the acceptable level. This is by a wide margin Brazil's weakest domain, and the data likely understate its severity.

Domain 5:
Tenure Security

Land and forest rights are recognized in law, but the completeness of the bundle of rights varies sharply by regime: Quilombola Territories and Indigenous Lands carry a complete bundle, while agro-extractivist settlement projects, forest settlement projects, sustainable development projects, extractive reserves, and national forests do not. Formally recognized community forest covers about 30 percent of Brazil's forest estate. Protection of property rights falls from a national value of 81 percent to a localized 66 percent, consistent with independent documentation of over a thousand cases of violence against Indigenous land and property rights in a single recent year, many tied to the government's own failure to complete territorial regularization. The domain is legally well founded but undermined by weak enforcement against encroachment and eviction.

Summary and Policy Implications

Brazil's formal architecture (constitutional water rights, recognized land rights, FPIC for Indigenous Peoples and Quilombolas) is comparatively well developed, but delivery falls short across all five domains. Domain 4 , inclusive governance and cultural respect, is the weakest, with the second-highest documented count of defenders killed of any study country. Priorities for policy action include a national system for monitoring attacks on defenders, expanded consultation rights, and, as some informants suggested, closing the collateral gap that keeps community land out of the formal credit system. Two indicators stand out for their likely effect on collective livelihoods. Lethal attacks on community activists are probably Brazil's most severe single constraint. Very low access to capacity development is the other: even where formal enterprise pathways exist, communities lack the skills to use them. Informants flagged topics the framework does not capture: housing, sanitation, productive infrastructure, transport, internet access, and differentiated health and education access. They asked that the Romani people (Povos Ciganos) be named explicitly in the population of interest, and suggested a gender and generational breakdown of all indicators and new indicators on the economic value of traditional livelihoods, carbon markets and payments for environmental services, and benefit-sharing from traditional knowledge.



Enterprise display at the Global Summit on Collective Livelihoods and Conservation. Yagó Kaingang, 2026.



COLOMBIA

San Juan Living Heritage Gathering, co-organized by ACADESAN, 2025

Context

Colombia's forests cover roughly 60 million hectares, about 53 percent of national territory, across the Amazon, the Pacific/Chocó rainforest, the Andes, and Orinoquía. Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and peasant communities draw livelihoods from timber and non-timber products, small-scale mining, coffee and cacao agroforestry, fisheries, and ecotourism. Official deforestation in 2024 was 113,608 hectares, the second-lowest in 24 years, but loss remains concentrated in the Amazon —in Caquetá, Meta, and Guaviare—, driven by illegal cattle ranching, coca, armed-group land grabbing, and palm oil.

Collective tenure rests on Indigenous reserves (*resguardos:* about 984 titled territories covering 35.2 million hectares, more than a quarter of the country) and Afro-descendant community councils titled under Law 70 of 1993 (336 territories, 5.7 million hectares). Both are constitutionally protected as unseizable, inalienable, and imprescriptible. Peasant reserve zones have a much weaker legal footing: thirty exist, 13 created since 2022, and together with the

newer Peasant agri-food territories, they cover about 1.5 percent of the country. Land restitution under Law 1448 of 2011 offers a remedy for conflict-related dispossession, but its procedural time limits and narrow definition of expropriation leave indirect dispossession, through economic pressure, gentrification, or environmental displacement, largely unaddressed.

Colombia was the world's deadliest country for land and environmental defenders in 2025, with 39 killings, nearly a third of the global total; nearly half of the victims were Indigenous, and Cauca, a cocaine-trafficking corridor, was the epicenter. Illegal economies and armed groups pervade forested Indigenous and Afro-descendant territories in Chocó, Cauca, and the Amazon. Carbon markets are an emerging flashpoint: investigations have documented Amazon carbon-credit projects advancing on Indigenous lands without adequate FPIC.

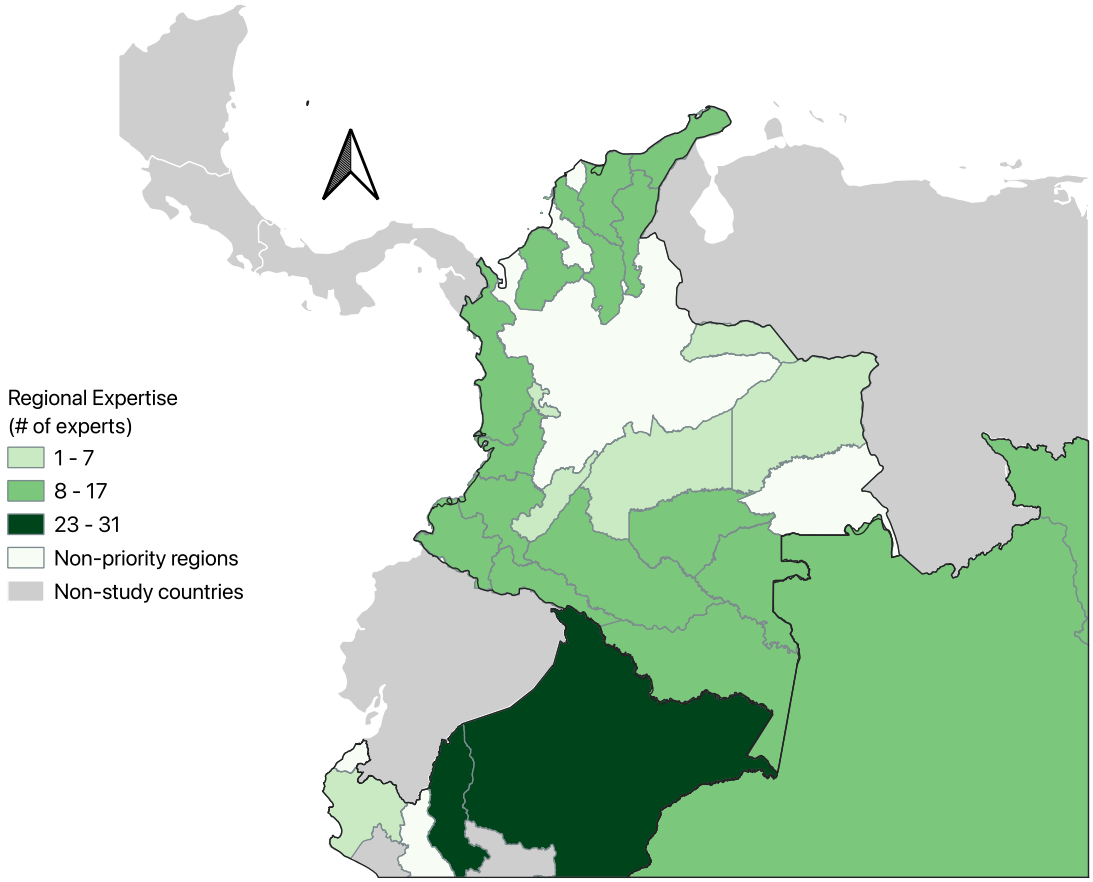


Figure 3: Key informants' regional expertise in Colombia.



A bicycle ride in the Amazon Basin. Joel Redman, If Not Us Then Who?

The political context shifted sharply in August 2026, when Abelardo de la Espriella took office promising a security crackdown, austerity, and expanded hydrocarbon and mining investment, reversing President Petro's agenda, under which collective titling had accelerated. Analysts warn that a proposed 1.5-million-hectare expansion of the agricultural frontier and new mining and drilling could put pressure on resguardo, Afro-descendant, and peasant lands. With the "Total Peace" process stalled and armed groups consolidating territorial control, forest tenure security faces considerable uncertainty.

Data Collection

The Colombia estimates draw from 35 key informants (21 women and 14 men) representing six sectors: researchers (34 percent), grassroots and community representatives (29 percent), private-sector actors linked to community economies and green businesses (17 percent), government officials (11 percent), civil society organizations (6 percent), and one respondent classified as other (3 percent).

Results

Domain 1:
Infrastructure and Connectivity

Colombia recognizes an unqualified constitutional right to water. Trust in the legal system has a localized estimate of 88 percent, above the acceptable level, though informants described red tape, high travel costs, and a disconnect between the special Indigenous jurisdictions and the ordinary justice system. Freedom from violent conflict is the domain's most severe constraint, falling from 49 percent nationally to 40 percent for forest territories, which informants linked to the overlap of institutional capture, armed conflict, and illegal economies. Overall, the domain performs comparatively well against the cross-country reference level, security excepted.

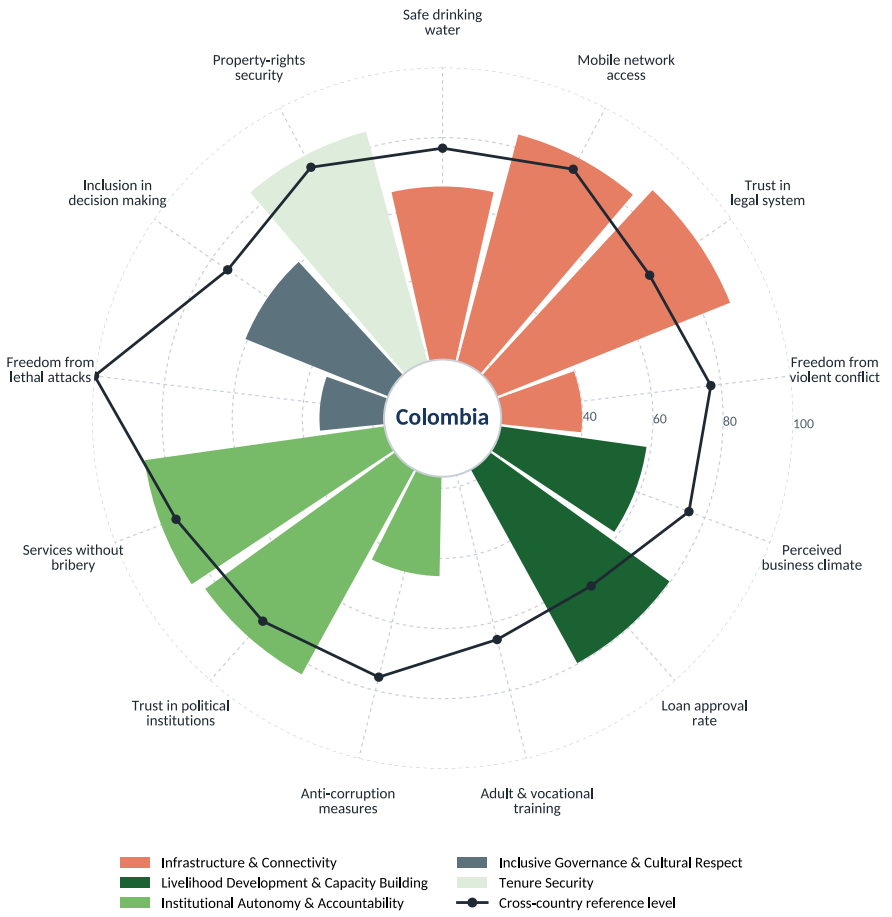


Figure 4. Spider chart comparing localized indicators (colored wedges) for the five policy domains to a cross-country reference level (black points).

Domain 2:
Livelihvood Development and Capacity Building

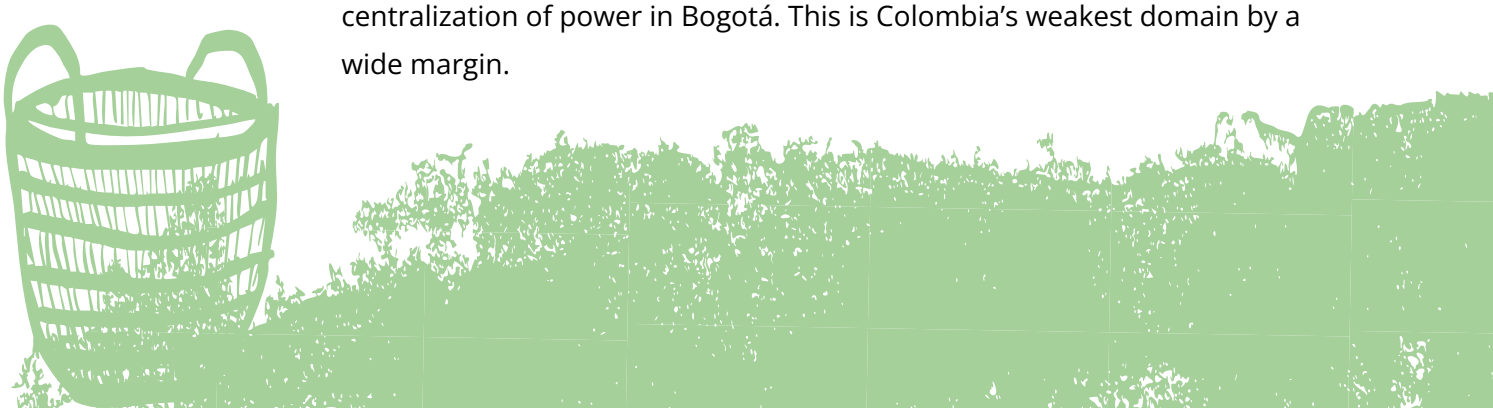
Whether collective title can serve as loan collateral varies by regime: barred for Afro-Colombian territories and *resguardos*, permitted in Peasant reserve zones, a difference that follows directly from the constitutional guarantees that make ethnic territories inalienable. The loan approval rate has a localized estimate of 80 percent, above the acceptable level, which most plausibly reflects selection: only those who expect to succeed apply. Access to capacity building is the domain's most severe shortfall, with national (4 percent) and localized (4 percent) values near zero. Informants described real training capacity in public entities and international cooperation; the binding constraint, they stressed, is the absence of a local economy in which training can be applied.

Domain 3:
Institutional Autonomy and Accountability

Self-rule and customary governance are recognized in law for Afro-Colombian territories and *resguardos* but not for Peasant reserve zones. Anti-corruption performance falls from a national value of 50 percent to a localized 45, consistent with informants' accounts of decisions concentrated in the center and corruption that drains territorial resources. Trust in political institutions is estimated higher for forest communities than nationally and above the acceptable level; informants attributed this partly to confusion between community self-government and national institutions and partly to fieldwork coinciding with a presidential election, so the result should be read with caution rather than as confirmed strength.

Domain 4:
Inclusive Governance and Cultural Respect

FPIC standards, notably prior consultation, are recognized in law for Afro-Colombian territories and *resguardos* but not for Peasant reserve zones. Lethal attacks on community activists rest on one of the starkest figures in the study: 509 defenders killed between 2012 and 2024, with a localized estimate far short of the acceptable level. Informants were emphatic that the count understates the problem, since reprisals extend to threats, intimidation, and restricted access to sacred sites, and that no official, unified database tracks attacks on defenders. Rural marginalization or exclusion from decision-making shows a milder but meaningful shortfall, attributed to the centralization of power in Bogotá. This is Colombia's weakest domain by a wide margin.



Domain 5:
Tenure Security

The bundle of rights is complete for Afro-Colombian territories and *resguardos* but not for Peasant reserve zones. Formally recognized community forest covers 57 percent of the national forest estate, though Peasant reserve zones cover barely 1.5 percent of the country. Protection of property rights has a localized estimate of 85 percent, close to the acceptable level, but informants cautioned against reading this as secure tenure, since dispossession occurs through economic pressure, gentrification, and environmental displacement that the indicator does not capture. The domain's apparent strength is a pattern worth flagging rather than a confirmed achievement.

Summary and Policy Implications

Colombia's formal architecture —constitutional water rights, ethnic self-government, FPIC, and one of the most consolidated ethnic-tenure regimes in the study— runs ahead of delivery, and physical safety is the one area where the gap is not slow implementation but an active threat. Domain 4 , inclusive governance and cultural respect, is by far the weakest, anchored in 509 documented killings since 2012 and centralized political power. Priorities include stronger protection for community leaders and defenders, an official database for tracking attacks, and closing the gap between the special Indigenous jurisdictions and the ordinary justice system.

Two indicators stand out for their likely effect on collective livelihoods. Lethal attacks matter most directly: fear of violence, not only killings but threats, intimidation, and restricted access to sacred sites, chills the civic and economic participation on which every other protection depends. Access to capacity building compounds this. Training capacity exists, but there is no local economic ecosystem in which to apply it, and the same constitutional protections

that make ethnic land inalienable also bar its use as collateral, a tension that calls for differentiated financial-inclusion instruments rather than weaker land protections. Carbon-credit and REDD+ safeguards also need strengthening, given documented projects on Indigenous lands without adequate consent.

Informants suggested establishing future indicators on to measure resilience capacity, biodiversity, and local land-use planning; the impacts of illicit economies, —especially illegal mining—, on nature, spirituality, and social fabric; the effects of carbon markets on self-governance; protections for peoples in voluntary isolation or initial contact; and territorial autonomy , defined by genuine local decision-making power rather than centralized consultations managed from Bogotá.



A park ranger from the Indigenous community of Borikada patrols in Cabaña Puerto Caiman, Resguardo Curare Los Ingleses. Juan Arredondo for Scientific American and Amazon Conservation Team.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Indigenous Pygmy peoples in the DRC harvesting crops and wood. EnviroNews RDC, 2024.

Context

The DRC holds the largest share of the Congo Basin rainforest, some 150 to 160 million hectares covering 60 to 68 percent of the country and one of the world's most important carbon stores and biodiversity reservoirs. Primary forest loss reached a record 590,000 hectares in 2024, driven by smallholder agriculture, fuelwood, logging, and mining, which reinforce the links between poverty, deforestation, and climate risk.

The DRC's community forestry model rests on the 2002 Forest Code and later regulations , including a 2014 decree and a 2016 ministerial order. By early 2024, more than 160 local community forest concessions covering about 3.3 million hectares had been granted, an important platform for local rights and livelihoods where finance and capacity exist. The DRC also recognizes the rights of Indigenous Pygmy Peoples under Law 22/030 of 2022, conservation concessions allocated to communities, and customary rights of use within production and permanent forests.

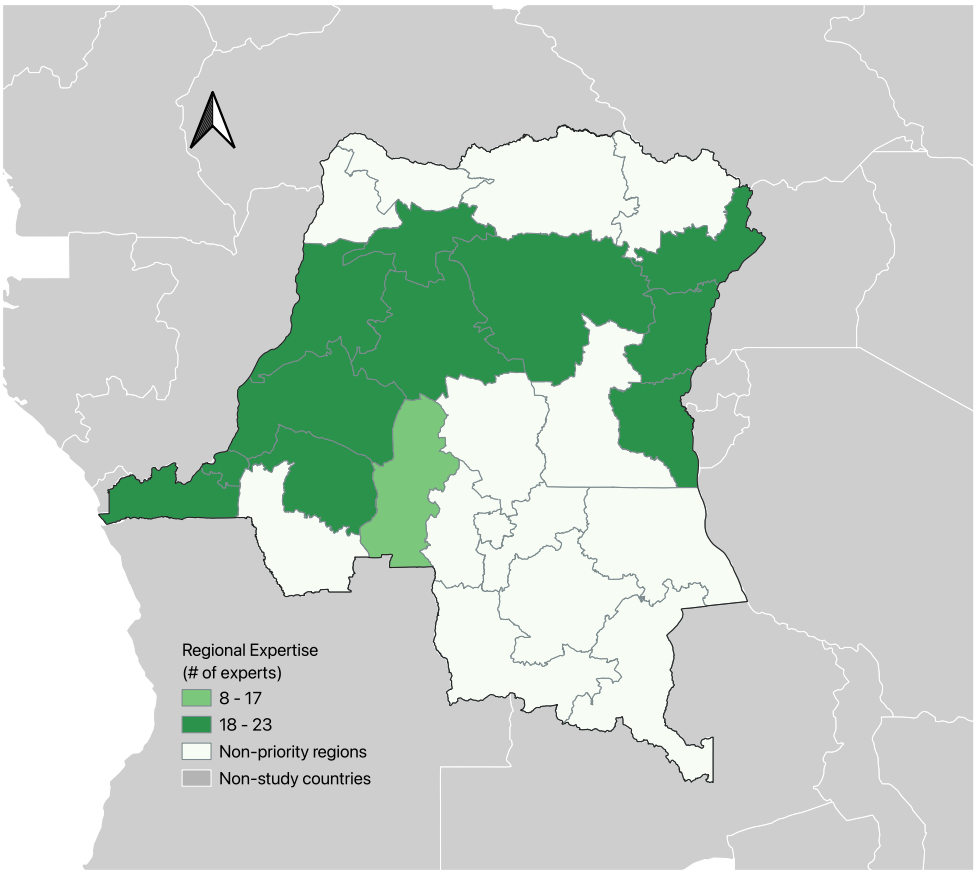


Figure 5: Key informants' regional expertise in the DRC.

Forests supply most household energy and act as a livelihood safety net, but a minerals-dominated economy and energy poverty keep pressure on subsistence clearing and charcoal production near cities. Despite its natural wealth, the country remains among the poorest in the world.

Indigenous and community coalitions helped advance community concessions and the 2022 Indigenous law, and watchdog platforms push for transparency and benefit obligations. But the DRC performs poorly on most measures of the wider policy environment, including democracy, corruption, state capacity, and ongoing violent conflict, all of which undermine collective livelihoods in forest areas.

Data Collection

DRC estimates draw from 31 key informants —16 percent female and 84 percent male—representing five sectors: community members (52 percent), government (16 percent), Indigenous Peoples (13 percent), private sector (10 percent), and research (10 percent). Figure 1 shows key informant regional expertise relative to the areas of interest to this study.

Results

Domain 1:
Infrastructure and Connectivity

The DRC recognizes a constitutional right to clean and safe drinking water, but delivery falls far short of that ambition. Trust in the legal system falls from 59 percent nationally to 50 percent for forest territories, and informants cautioned that access to a forum does not make it affordable, impartial, or effective. Freedom from violent conflict is the domain's most severe constraint: the national value is already 5 percent and the localized estimate 4.6 percent. Informants attributed the insecurity to encroachment by outsiders on community territories and forest resources rather than to conflict within communities.



Indigenous Pygmy women collect water, DRC. EnviroNews RDC, 2024.

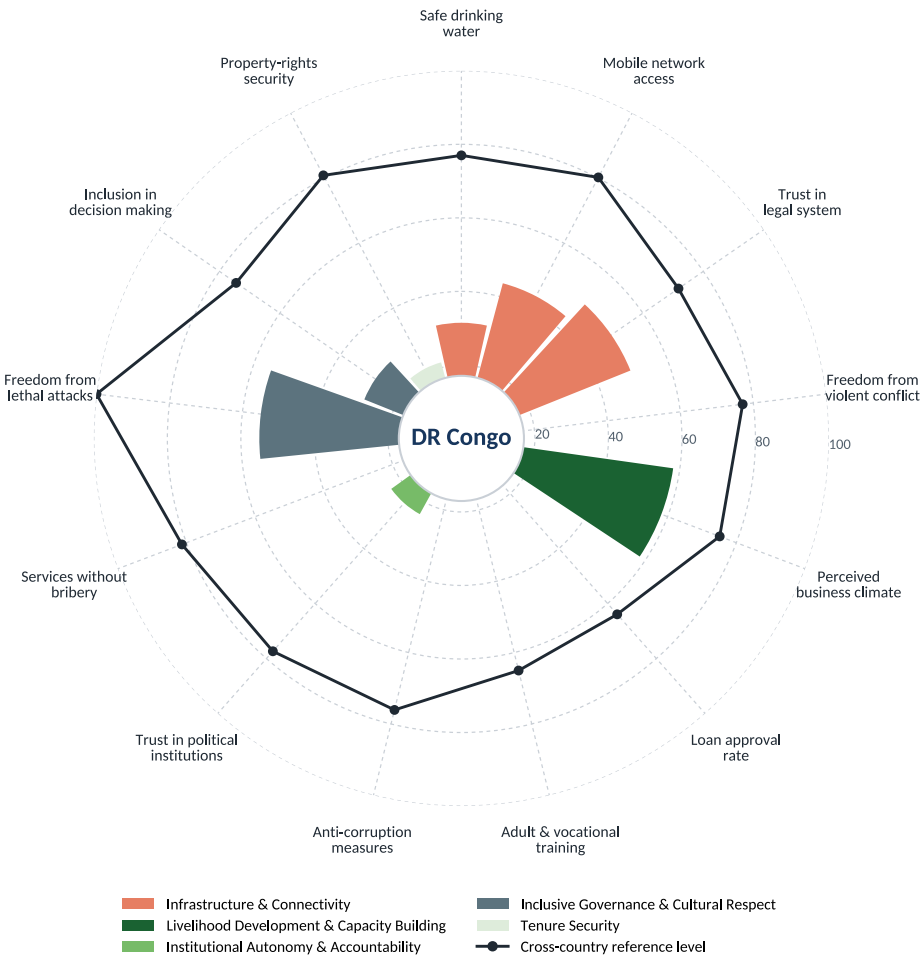


Figure 6. Spider chart comparing localized indicators (colored wedges) for the five policy domains to a cross-country reference level (black points).

Domain 2:
Livelihood Development and Capacity Building

Only local community forest concessions and conservation concessions allow land to be alienated or used as collateral; other regimes, including those covering Indigenous Pygmy Peoples, do not. No localized estimate is reported for the loan approval rate , which has a national value of 91 percent. Informants were clear that communities rarely apply because they expect refusal, so an approval rate among applicants would reflect near-total exclusion from formal credit rather than a policy strength, and carbon-credit financing, often

raised as an alternative, has not yet reached them. Access to capacity building is the domain's most severe shortfall, with national and localized values of 1 percent, more than 65 points below the acceptable level, although informants noted that the indicator misses informal and community-based learning.

Domain 3:
Institutional Autonomy and Accountability

Laws provide for an ombudsman, but none of the community-based tenure regimes assessed carries legal recognition of community self-rule and customary governance: a state-centered grievance system without a legal basis for autonomous community governance. Trust in political institutions falls from 30 percent nationally to 24 percent for forest territories; informants distinguished officials' willingness to respond from their capacity to resolve problems. Freedom from bribery is the domain's most severe weakness: only 20 percent of public-service users nationally avoid paying a bribe, falling to 16 percent for forest territories, and informants suggested even this understates the pattern, since corruption affecting communities often takes the form of in-kind gifts that the indicator does not capture.

Domain 4:
Inclusive Governance and Cultural Respect

FPIC standards vary by tenure regime rather than applying uniformly; protections valid for Pygmy Peoples are not extended to all. Lethal attacks on community activists fall well short of the cross-country reference level; Informants were surprised by the national count of 78 defenders killed between 2012 and 2024 but agreed that forest communities face far more threats, intimidation, and reprisals than that count implies. Rural marginalization or exclusion from decision-making also shows substantial exclusion (a localized estimate of 28 percent), and informants noted that being present at a consultation is not the same as having the information, influence, and representation to shape it, so the real gap may be deeper.

Domain 5:
Tenure Security

The DRC recognizes the land and forest rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, but the bundle of rights is incomplete in all three community-based regimes assessed. Only 4 percent of forest land is recognized as owned or managed by communities, a gap informants traced to a conceptual divide rather than administrative delay: some reject the idea that forest should need to be "designated" for peoples who regard it as theirs, while others hold that land and subsoil belong to the State. Protection of property rights falls from a national value of 26 percent to a localized 21 percent, and informants described eviction, encroachment, and arbitrary withdrawal of rights as a common experience. Legal recognition exists, but its content, scale, and protection remain limited, and progress may depend as much on reconciling customary and statutory ideas of ownership as on administrative capacity.

Summary and Policy Implications

The DRC faces a sequencing problem. Formal openings for community tenure, grievance, and enterprise exist, but insecurity, corruption, and weak administration constrain them, sometimes severely. Before anything else, communities need basic protections so they can legally claim their rights and exercise them without serious costs or risks.



Indigenous Pygmy women in the DRC pose for a photo. EnviroNews RDC, 2024.

Freedom from violent conflict is the critical gap and points to peacebuilding, territorial protection, and enforcement. The absence of a loan-approval estimate reflects exclusion from formal credit, with carbon-credit financing a promising but unrealized channel. The very low share of recognized community forest reflects a disagreement between customary and statutory ideas of ownership, so expanding recognition may require legal reconciliation rather than faster permitting. Several governance indicators, on corruption, inclusion, and access to justice, are framed in ways that informants said miss communities' experience (in-kind rather than cash corruption, symbolic rather than real participation, access without affordability), so the true gaps may be larger than the numbers show.

Human security and accountability are the enabling infrastructure for all other reforms. Institutional entry points for community tenure and enterprise hold promise but do not yet add up to an enabling environment. Making access routine would require a fuller bundle of community rights, support for communities through recognition procedures, and pairing finance with technical assistance and capacity development. For advocates, oversight and accompaniment go together: documenting barriers and rights violations while helping community institutions navigate procedures and demand enforceable remedies.





INDONESIA

Locals prepare to dry coffee in Tebat Pulau, Sumatra, Indonesia. Jacob Maentz, 2022.

Context

Indonesia holds the world's third-largest tropical forest estate, about 91 million hectares or 48 percent of national territory, concentrated in Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Papua. Forest communities depend on timber and non-timber products such as rattan, resin, and honey, agroforestry, swidden agriculture, and fisheries. Indonesia lost about 262,000 hectares of forest in 2024, half of it in Kalimantan; pulpwood plantations have overtaken palm oil as the largest driver, nickel mining is expanding in Sulawesi and Papua, and about 97 percent of clearing occurred inside legally sanctioned concessions.

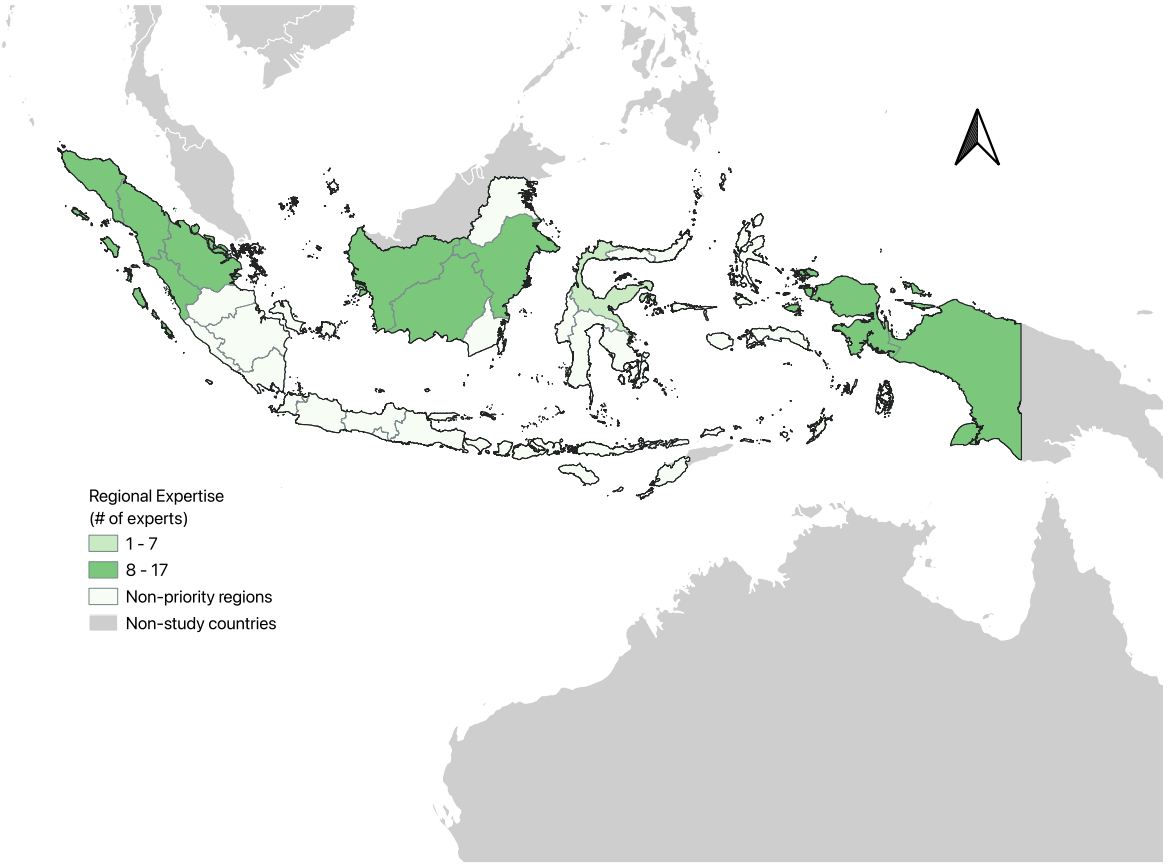


Figure 7: Key informants' regional expertise in Indonesia.

Communities access forests formally through six schemes: customary law forests (*Hutan Adat*), community forests, partnership schemes, community plantation forests, village forests, and communal rights— which differ in the rights they confer. A 2013 Constitutional Court ruling made *Hutan Adat* a category distinct from state forest, but implementation lags: about 345,000 hectares were gazetted for 164 communities by late 2025, against a government target of 1.4 million more hectares by 2029 and tens of millions claimed by Indigenous organizations. The broader Social Forestry program had reached 8.4 million hectares and 1.4 million families by 2025, falling short of its 12.7-million-hectare target. The long-discussed Indigenous Peoples Bill has not passed as of September 2026.

V-Dem classifies Indonesia as an electoral autocracy. Authority over land and forests is dispersed across several national ministries, with implementation delegated to provincial and district agencies of uneven capacity. Papua's special autonomy coexists with heavy militarization and state-supported land conversion that Papuan and Indigenous advocates say undermine its protective intent.

Data Collection

Indonesia estimates draw on 30 key informants from five sectors: grassroots and community representatives (30 percent), researchers (30 percent), civil society (27 percent), government (10 percent), and the private sector (3 percent), covering Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Papua. Informants cautioned that national statistics are biased toward Java and that even provincial data may not reflect conditions for the populations of interest. In Indonesia the question on acceptable performance was understood as the government's perceived current performance, so Indonesia's localized estimates are compared with the cross-country reference level, as seen in Section 3 of the baseline report.

Results

Domain 1:
Infrastructure and Connectivity

Indonesia does not recognize a constitutional right to water. Access to safely managed drinking water rises from a national value of 89 percent to a localized estimate of 98 percent, above the cross-country reference level. Informants attributed this to communities' own springs and groundwater rather than to government services. Freedom from violent conflict falls from 55 percent nationally to 47 percent for forest territories, well below the cross-country level.

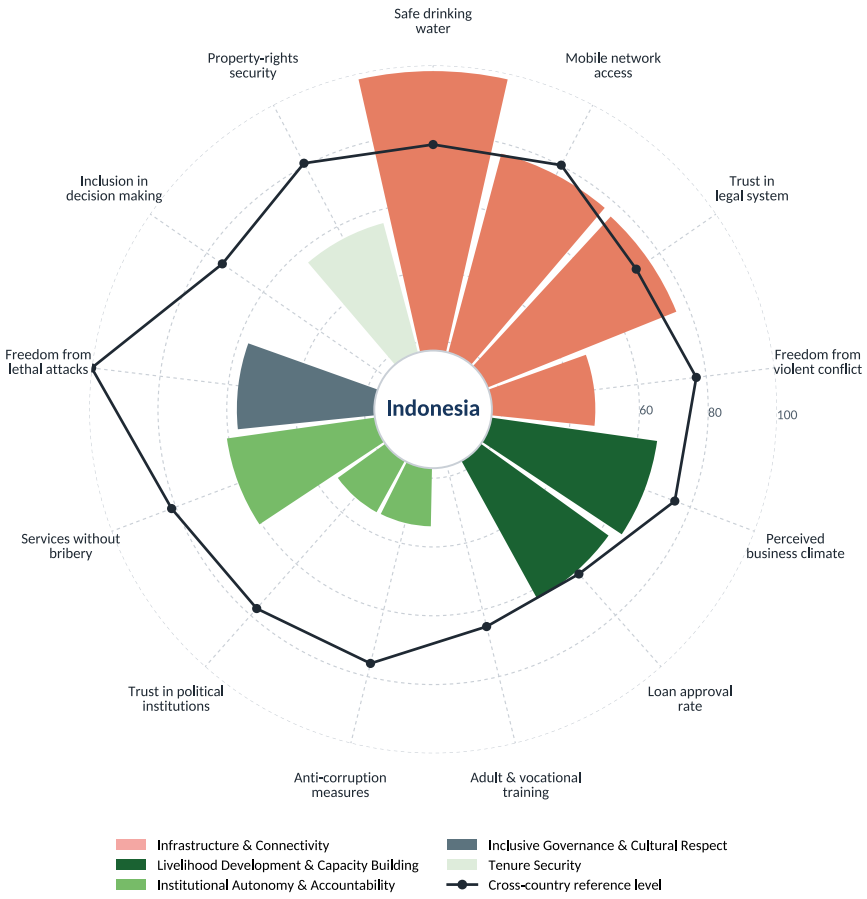


Figure 8. Spider chart comparing localized indicators (colored wedges) for the five policy domains to a cross-country reference level (black points).



Domain 2:
Livelihood Development and Capacity Building

None of the six tenure regimes allows collective title to be used as collateral. Perceived business climate falls from a national value of 78 percent to a localized 66 percent. Informants said the national figure reflects the general ease of registering a business, not the difficulty communities without collateral face in capitalizing resource-based enterprises. Access to capacity building is the most severe shortfall, with a localized estimate of 1.1 percent against a cross-country reference level of 65 percent.

Domain 3:
Institutional Autonomy and Accountability

Two regimes—customary law forest and communal rights— legal recognition of customary governance; the other four regimes do not. Trust in political institutions has a localized estimate of 34 percent, which informants linked to a service culture oriented toward pleasing superiors rather than citizens. Freedom from bribery falls from a national value of 70 percent to a localized 61, and informants described cash-based public administration as normal rather than exceptional. The domain falls well short of the cross-country reference level.

Domain 4:
Inclusive Governance and Cultural Respect

Indonesia is the only study country that does not recognize FPIC standards in national law. Lethal attacks on community activists show a large shortfall, and informants said even this understates the problem because no organization compiles comprehensive data on attacks. Rural marginalization or exclusion from decision-making has a national value of 14 and a localized estimate of 15, both very low; informants pointed to regional autonomy that entrenched local elite control over natural resources and to Papua's special autonomy, which has not loosened Jakarta's grip on decisions. This is Indonesia's clearest and best-documented weakness.

Domain 5:
Tenure Security

The bundle of rights is complete only under customary law forests. Formally recognized community forest covers only 6.7 percent of forest land. Protection of property rights falls from a national value of 67 percent to a localized 56 percent, 25 points short of the cross-country reference level, and even the national figure is dominated by already-titled, non-forest land; forest communities often receive conditional, time-limited access rather than full tenure, if their rights are recognized at all.

Summary and Policy Implications

Domains 2 to 4 are the weakest. Domain 4, inclusive governance and cultural respect, is where the numbers and the qualitative record align most closely, making it the clearest point for policy action: on the absence of FPIC in national law, documented and likely undercounted attacks on activists, and elite capture of regional autonomy in Papua and elsewhere.

Two indicators stand out. Access to capacity development (Domain 2) is Indonesia's most severe shortfall, and because capacity underpins the use of every other condition, it plausibly constrains all the other domains. Domain 5, tenure security, compounds it: collective title cannot serve as collateral under any regime (though whether it should is debated), the bundle of rights is incomplete under five of six regimes, and only 6.7 percent of community forest is recognized. Forest communities' land is therefore neither bankable nor secure, and exposed to displacement without the compensation available to other landholders. Papua needs governance instruments of its own, given its special autonomy and history of inequitable exploitation.

Informants suggested establishing future indicators to measure gender-based violence in agrarian and resource relations, the influence of political parties on community institutions, the erosion of traditional structures and intergenerational knowledge, and social reproduction measured without a single "ideal" standard.



Landscape of rice fields along the road heading to Tebat Pulau, Sumatra, Indonesia. Jacob Maentz, 2022.



PERU

A Quechua herder feeds alpacas in Chinchero, Cusco. Shutterstock.

Context

Peru retains about 71 million hectares of natural forest —55 percent of its national territory— mostly in the Amazon, supporting the livelihoods of millions of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant Peoples through timber and non-timber products such as Brazil nut and shiringa, fisheries, and agroforestry. Peru lost about 210,000 hectares of forest in 2024 to smallholder agriculture, roads and settlement, illegal logging, coca, and artisanal mining.

The Forest and Wildlife Law established the Forestry Service as national authority and the Agency for the Supervision of Fores and Wildlife Resources (Organismo de Supervisión de los Recursos Forestales y de Fauna Silvestre, OSINFOR) as oversight body, with regional governments issuing many rights and enforcing management plans; recent guidelines from 2024 to 2025 aim to

simplify community management planning. Community tenure is recognized through four regimes: communal reserves, native community forest lands suitable for forestry, Peasant community lands, and Indigenous reserves, the first three classified as community-owned. There is no specific legal recognition for Afro-descendant communities.

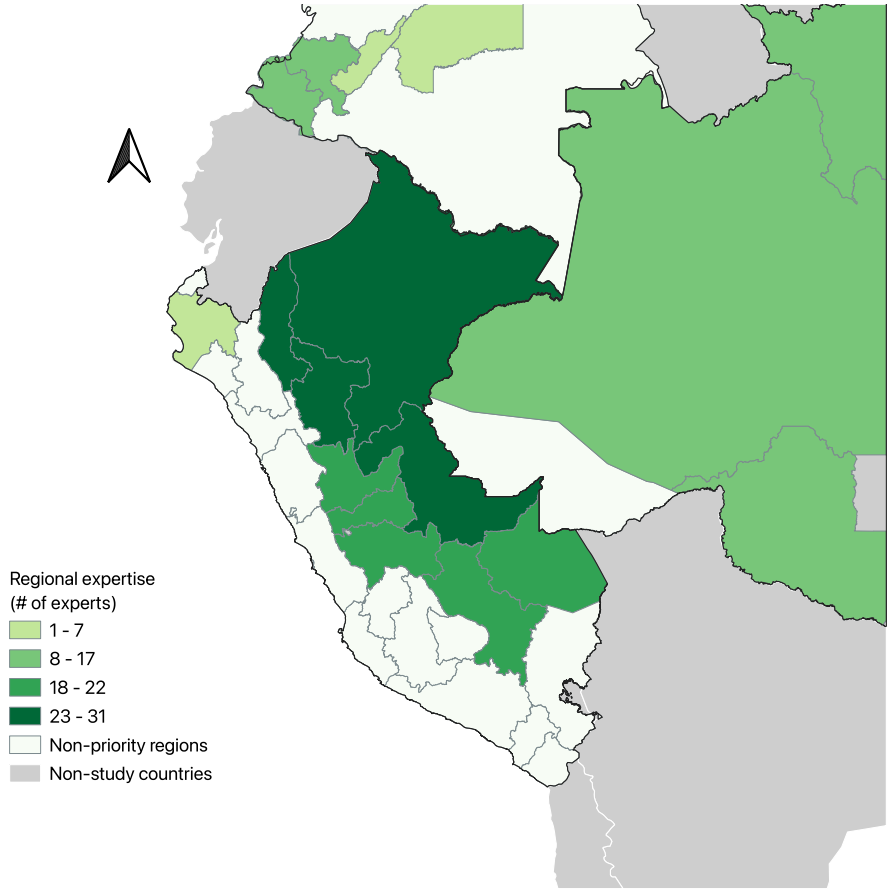


Figure 9: Key informants' regional expertise in Peru.

OSINFOR's public reporting and near-real-time satellite tools have supported enforcement, but illegal activity and road expansion continue, underscoring the need to pair enforcement with community rights and incentives. Peru has increased support for community forest governance and value chains, and the Brazil-nut concession system in Madre de Dios underpins a major forest economy. Indigenous federations —such as the Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest (Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana, AIDESEP) and Confederation of Amazonian

Nationalities of Peru (Confederación de Nacionalidades Amazónicas del Perú, CONAP) shape national agendas on titling, consultation, protection of isolated peoples, and climate finance, but titling gaps leave many communities exposed to invasion.

V-Dem has classified Peru as a hybrid regime since 2022, and in 2026 the government adopted a national policy on Indigenous Peoples whose implementation will be worth monitoring.

Data Collection

The Peru estimates draw from 34 key informants —38 percent female, 59 percent male, and 3 percent non-binary— representing five sectors: civil society organizations (26 percent), government (29 percent), grassroots and community organizations (15 percent), private sector (12 percent), and researchers (18 percent). Expertise included Indigenous Peoples (32), Afro-descendant Peoples (4), and other local communities (n=30) in forested regions of Peru, as seen in Figure 9.

Results

Domain 1:
Infrastructure and Connectivity

Peru's constitutional right to water is not matched in practice for forest communities. Access to mobile networks falls from 87 percent nationally to 72 percent for forest territories. Freedom from violent conflict shows the smallest difference from the national value (14 to 12 percent) only because the national value is already extremely low; it is 53 points short of the acceptable level and drives the domain's overall shortfall.

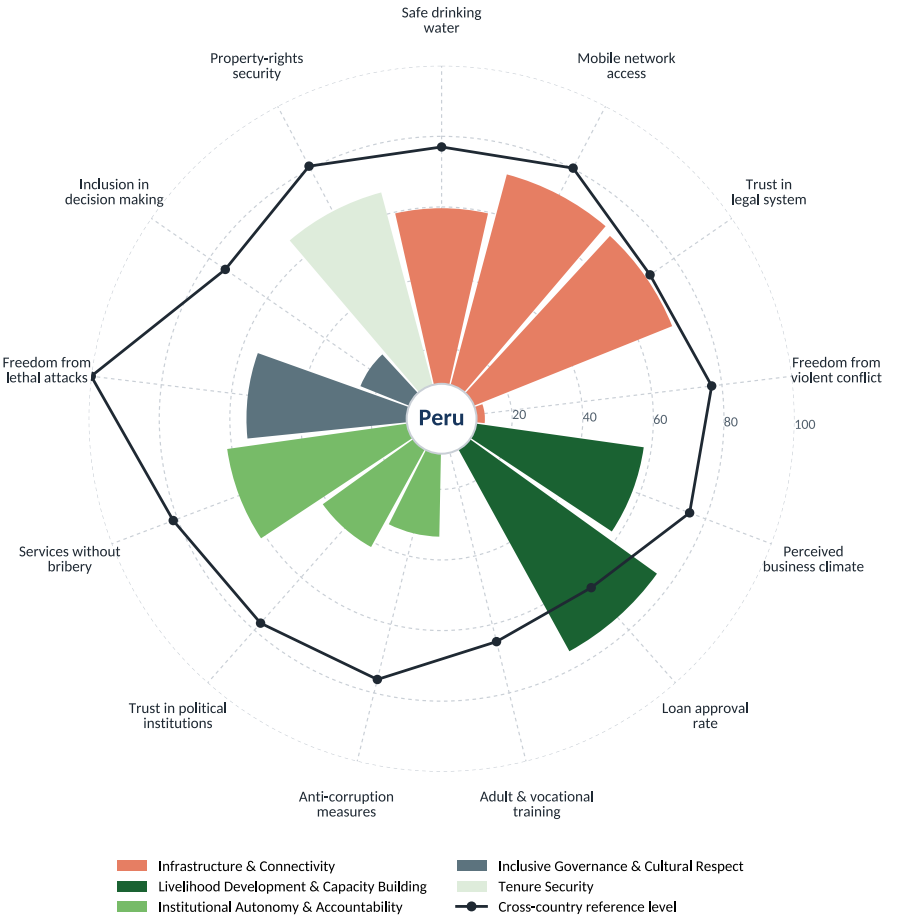


Figure 10. Spider chart comparing localized indicators (colored wedges) for the five policy domains to a cross-country reference level (black points).

Domain 2:
Livelihood Development and Capacity Building

Whether collective title can serve as collateral varies by regime. It is possible for Native community forest lands and Peasant community forestlands suitable for forestry, not for Indigenous or communal reserves. The loan approval rate has an unusual profile: the localized estimate of 75 percent is 22 points below the national value of 97 percent yet above the national reference level, which likely reflects selection into loan applications rather than broad access, since communities facing the greatest barriers never apply. Access to capacity building is the domain's most severe shortfall, with national (4 percent) and localized (3 percent) values more than 60 points below the acceptable level.

Domain 3:
Institutional Autonomy and Accountability

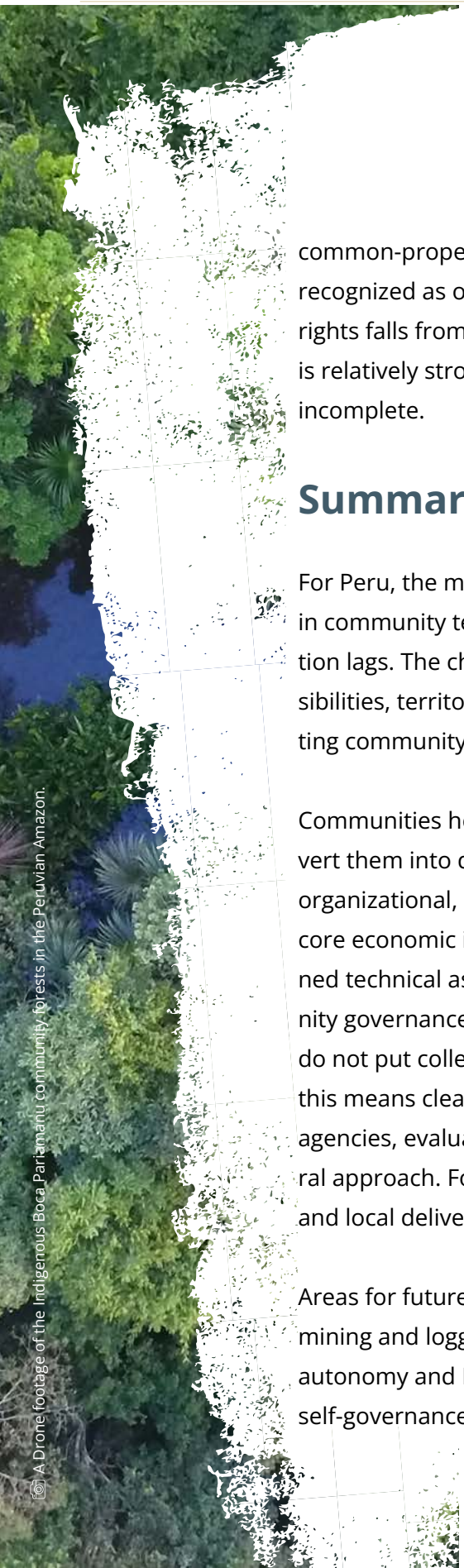
Self-rule and customary governance are recognized for Indigenous reserves, native community forest lands, and Peasant community forest lands, but not for communal reserves, so communities' legal standing depends partly on the category under which their rights are recognized. Trust in political institutions falls from 50 percent nationally to 41 percent for forest territories, 36 points below the cross-country reference level. Anti-corruption performance falls from 40 to 33 percent, about 43 points below the cross-country level. The accountability architecture already in place is substantially under-delivering for forest communities.

Domain 4:
Inclusive Governance and Cultural Respect

National legislation recognizes FPIC standards and 48 non-colonial languages as official, which establishes a strong formal basis for consultation and linguistically accessible administration. In practice, lethal attacks on community activists fall well short of the cross-country reference level, and rural marginalization or exclusion from decision-making is lower still: only 25 percent of districts nationally have a joint development plan with civil-society participation, —and the estimate for forest territories is 25 percent against an acceptable level of 70.

Domain 5:
Tenure Security

Peru's tenure profile looks favorable but needs unpacking. The bundle of rights is complete for native community forest lands and Peasant community forest lands but not for Indigenous reserves and communal reserves, so recognition does not uniformly bring the full set of powers that robust



© A Drone footage of the Indigenous Boca Pariamanu community, forests in the Peruvian Amazon.

common-property governance requires. Only 34 percent of forest land is recognized as owned or managed by communities. Protection of property rights falls from a national value of 80 percent to a localized 66. The domain is relatively strong for Peru, but recognition and territorial coverage remain incomplete.

Summary and Policy Implications

For Peru, the main implication is to make existing commitments operational in community territories. Legal and institutional footholds exist; implementation lags. The challenge is to connect them to budgets, administrative responsibilities, territorial presence, and measurable service standards while respecting community autonomy.

Communities hold rights and see enterprise opportunities but cannot convert them into durable gains, for lack of financing and of sustained technical, organizational, and commercial support. Capacity development is therefore core economic infrastructure. Priorities from the study include locally designed technical assistance, mobile network infrastructure, support for community governance and financial management, and financing instruments that do not put collective assets at disproportionate risk. For national authorities, this means clear implementation responsibilities across central and regional agencies, evaluated by outcomes in community territories with an intercultural approach. Following the chain from legal obligation to budget, procedure, and local delivery can show where the links are weak.

Areas for future policy and indicator development include the effects of illegal mining and logging on territories, health and education services, territorial autonomy and Indigenous institutions, the effects of carbon markets on self-governance, and protections for isolated or recently contacted peoples.

NEPAL



A herder walks with their animals in the Annapurna mountains, Nepal. Adobe Stock.

Context

Nepal's forest cover has grown from about 26 percent of national territory in 1992 to roughly 46 percent —6.5 million hectares— in 2025, one of the best-documented forestry success stories, driven by its community forestry movement and, more recently, by outmigration and abandonment of marginal farmland. Forests underpin livelihoods through fuelwood, fodder, timber, medicinal and aromatic plants, and agroforestry, and Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) serve roughly a third of the population. Tree-cover loss continues in the Terai and mid-hills outside strong CFUG management, driven by fuelwood extraction, roads, encroachment, and fire, with climate change adding to the pressure.

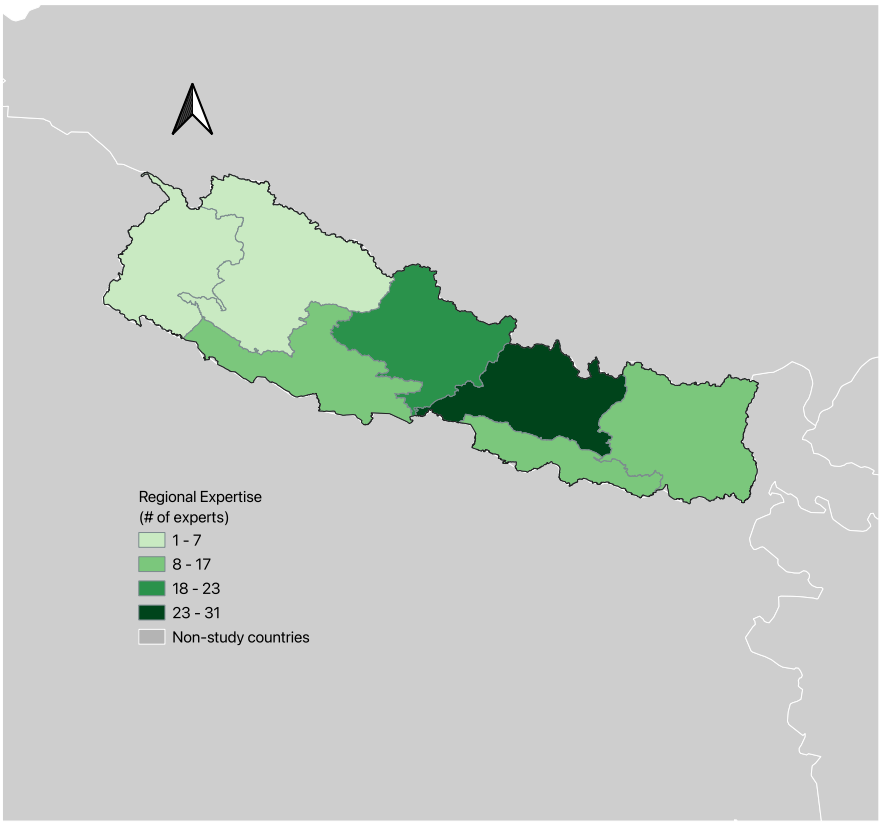


Figure 11: Key informants' regional expertise in Nepal.

Community —grounded in the 1993 Forest Act, revised in 2019— is the main channel through which communities hold forest rights. This includes community forests—with more than 23,000 CFUGs managing approximately 2.5 million hectares; community leasehold forests, religious forests, and buffer zone community and religious forests. Community forests are entrusted to user groups for management and use, but the land remains state property; recognition of a community forest is not community land ownership.

The 2015 federal restructuring split forest authority across federal, provincial, and local governments, leaving coordination gaps and inconsistent implementation of community rights. Non-timber value chains and ecotourism show potential, but benefits have not reached poorer households consistently, and outmigration drains the labor needed for forest management. Nepal is also in political transition: large "Gen Z" protests in September 2025 forced the prime minister's resignation, and Balendra Shah has led the government

since March 2026. The unsettled division of authority and political instability create uncertainty for forest administration and support to CFUGs, but also an opening to clarify roles across the three tiers of government.

Data Collection

The Nepal estimates draw from 31 key informants (10 women and 21 men), representing six sectors: researchers (26 percent), civil society, including CFUGs (23 percent), government officials spanning federal, provincial, and local levels (23 percent), grassroots and community organizations (16 percent), the private sector (10 percent), and other stakeholders including media (3 percent). Figure 11 shows interviewee regional expertise.

Results

Domain 1:
Infrastructure and Connectivity

Nepal's Constitution does not recognize a comprehensive right to water, but Article 35(4) guarantees every citizen access to clean drinking water and sanitation, with other dimensions of the right addressed in sectoral law. Access to safely managed drinking water falls from a national value of 80 percent to a localized estimate of 72 percent; experts argued that the underlying measure of perceived safety understates the problem and should capture source type, distance, reliability, and treatment. Freedom from violent conflict falls from 59 to 58 percent. Overall, this is Nepal's comparatively strongest domain, though every indicator falls short of the national figure, and most fall short of the acceptable level.

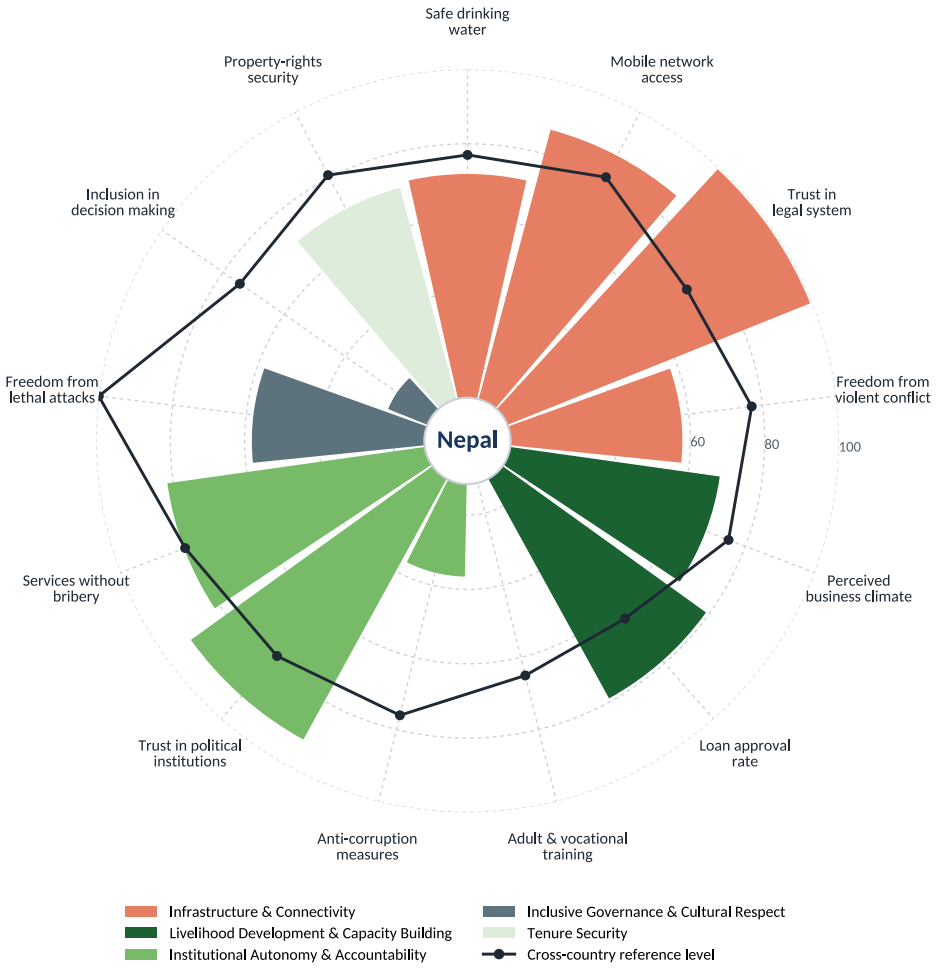


Figure 12. Spider chart comparing localized indicators (colored wedges) for the five policy domains to a cross-country reference level (black points).

Domain 2:
Livelihood Development and Capacity Building

Collective title can be used as collateral under community forests but not under community leasehold forests, religious forests, or the two buffer zone regimes, so most community-held forest cannot be used as loan security, however well it is managed. The loan approval rate falls from a national value of 93 percent to a localized 79, which informants explained as a structural mismatch: CFUGs manage substantial forest resources but face rigid collateral requirements, strict approval criteria, and limited awareness of concessional finance. Access to capacity building is the domain's most severe shortfall,

at 3 percent nationally and locally; informants described training programs as short-term, donor-driven, concentrated among local elites, and disconnected from markets. This is one of Nepal's weakest domains.

Domain 3:
Institutional Autonomy & Accountability

The legal conditions for exercising self-rule and customary governance are present under the Community Forests regime, but not under the other four regimes. Trust in political institutions falls from 97 percent nationally to 92 percent for forest territories; informants described long waits, burdensome paperwork, and officials more responsive to local elites than to poor or marginalized communities, suggesting that relatively high levels of reported trust may coexist with barriers to effective and equitable service delivery. Anti-corruption performance falls from 40 to 37 percent, the domain's largest shortfall, which informants attributed to malpractice at Division Forest Offices and municipalities and to elite capture within CFUGs themselves, including monopolized executive positions and opaque fund allocation. According to Transparency International, Nepal's 2025 Corruption Perceptions Index score of 34 and the interviews suggest that bribery figures understate corruption, which extends to coercive delays and broker-mediated rent extraction.

Domain 4:
Inclusive Governance & Cultural Respect



FPIC standards are recognized in law, varying by tenure regime, but informants said these protections do not translate into meaningful participation. Lethal attacks on community activists rest on a national count of just one recorded case, which informants considered a clear undercount, since it captures only killings and disappearances and misses the threats, intimidation, and exclusion from resources that are far more common. Rural marginalization or exclusion from decision-making falls from a national value of 24 to a localized 23; informants argued that the national index is too abstract to capture the layered exclusion communities experience, from weak representation to elite influence over decisions. This is Nepal's weakest domain.

Domain 5:
Tenure Security

The bundle of rights is complete under the Community Forests regime but incomplete under the other four regimes. Recognition is focused on forest rights, with no overarching recognition of customary rights guaranteeing property over land. Formally recognized community forest covers 14.6 percent of forest land, and informants cautioned against equating community-forest recognition with ownership, since the Forest Act entrusts management, not title, to user groups. Protection of property rights changes only slightly from a national value of 73 percent to a localized 71 percent. However, experts argued that insecurity should not be measured through formal eviction alone: displacement from protected areas and infrastructure, restrictions on customary rights, and delayed or cancelled operational plans weaken community rights without any eviction being recorded.

Summary and Policy Implications

Nepal's enabling environment is strongest where the state is expected to deliver a basic service (Domain 1) and weakest where policy would redistribute power, capital, or influence away from incumbents (Domains 2 and 4). Priorities include extending collateral eligibility across tenure regimes, redesigning capacity-building programs to reach all community members rather than local elites, and strengthening protection against reprisals for participation.

Two indicators stand out: access to capacity building and the loan approval rate, which together decide whether legally recognized forest access ever becomes an enterprise. Training is donor-driven and elite-concentrated, and collateral rules exclude most community-held land from formal credit, however well it is managed. Exclusion from decision-making and anti-corruption performance also matter, since they decide whether the finance and training that exist reach all members or are captured by local elites through CFUG positions and opaque fund allocation.

Twenty-five of the 31 experts consulted identified gaps in the framework: infrastructure and market connectivity beyond mobile phones (roads, electricity, internet); customary governance and traditional knowledge; the policy-implementation gap itself; value chains and benefit-sharing for poorer households; gender, migration, and demographic change; climate and disaster resilience; and practical rights to access, use, harvest, manage, and sell forest products, as distinct from formal title.



Gayanimaya Tamang, a member of the Lag Lage Pacha community forest user group near Kathmandu, fertilizes the soil. Asha Stuart, 2025.