

# Organising pitsawyers to engage

## Tool

### Purpose:

Policies and institutions often exclude small forest producers, because decision-makers assume that an army of small producers left unchecked will destroy the forest. Whether this assumption is correct or not, small producers need to organise - so that they can improve their practices and argue their case. This tool enables development practitioners to help small producers such as pitsawyers to base long-term livelihoods on sustaining - not destroying - local forest resources.

### Activities:

#### 1 Understand the pitsawing enterprise

How does the operation work? Who is indirectly and directly involved? What are their objectives? How do pitsawyers and institutions relate to each other? What are the important power dynamics of these relationships? How do these affect legitimacy and access to decision-making?

#### 2 Discuss the pros and cons of setting up a formal organisation

Strength in numbers often wins recognition: would forming an association, co-operative or company empower local forest producers to achieve their objectives? Is it feasible? Who will it include and whom will it exclude? What support will it need? Who can provide it? Is the level of mutual trust sufficient to form an organisation?

#### 3 Set up the organisation

Having the right institutional structure from the start is crucial for an equitable and profitable organisation. Agree criteria for membership. Agree a representative structure that separates executive and disciplinary branches. Agree principles such

### Keep in Mind

★ The tool aims to empower local people who are involved in small-scale forest enterprise but who are unable to access local forest resources for themselves.

★ Outside powerful interests may not welcome new local entrants to the market.

★ Some local government officials responsible for processing applications may attempt to hinder progress. Be patient and persistent. Seek advice from local NGOs and officials to support your rights.



as "one person one vote" for the written constitution. Seek advice and support from local NGOs and local government officials responsible for forestry, environment, enterprise or co-operatives.

#### 4 **Operate the organisation**

A company, co-operative or association should develop a plan for achieving its aims. Prioritise aims and how to achieve them. From the constitution, agree clear rules, roles, responsibilities and returns. Agree to regular meetings to evaluate progress and decide further action. Keep a written record of all meetings.

#### 5 **Engage in effective partnerships**

Legitimacy is not gained simply by setting up an organisation. It has to be earned. An organisation's collective voice can be heard more easily by forest authorities. If a commitment to sustainable forest management is what they hear, pitsawyers' organisations can engage in legitimate partnerships for forest management.

★ Some members may assert themselves from within the newly formed organisation. Avoid this by writing down who does what and how to resolve disputes.

★ It may be difficult to agree who can be members and what the roles of all the players should be. Take time to agree these.

#### **Further information**

Find full tool and other related tools and resources at:

**[www.policy-powertools.org](http://www.policy-powertools.org)**

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