

WEBINAR

# Transitioning shifting cultivation to resilient farming systems in South and Southeast Asia

Launch of knowledge products  
and discussion

30 June 2021 | MS Teams  
11:00–12:00am (CEST), 14:45–15:45 (NST)

Shifting cultivation is commonly perceived as a primitive agricultural practice, economically unviable and a cause of tropical deforestation and environmental degradation. Despite growing scientific evidence to the contrary and a revision of this position by several countries and international agencies, policies based on this misconception replace the practice with settled agriculture. Such policy positions in conjunction with market forces, have led to the rapid expansion of settled agriculture across landscapes in South and Southeast Asia. However, shifting cultivation persists across much of South and Southeast Asia and parts of Africa and Latin America. The management of shifting cultivation, therefore, remains enigmatic for governments across the world even today.

It is estimated that around [280 million hectares is under shifting cultivation globally](#), with around 110 million hectares in Asia alone. An estimated 200 million people in Asia are reportedly dependent on forest-based agriculture, including shifting cultivation. Efforts by governments to replace shifting cultivation with settled agriculture has not yielded the desired outcomes. Instead, research and

field studies suggest the emergence of second-generation issues following transitions to settled agriculture affecting food availability particularly for poorer households, insecurity of tenure and an alarming increase in ecosystem degradation. This has ramifications for poverty alleviation and attainment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Management approaches and the policy framework governing transformation of shifting cultivation areas need an urgent reappraisal. Strategies facilitating transition of shifting cultivation need to be re-examined, redefined and remolded, to ensure that transformation of shifting cultivation does not result in drastic depletion of dietary diversity and malnourishment, increased insecurity of tenure or accelerate depletion of forest cover compromising the sustenance of ecosystem services. Left unaddressed, present approaches can lead to further distortion of shifting cultivation, perpetuating marginalization of shifting cultivators and further impoverishment, compromising their resilience as well as that of their food systems and the immediate environment supporting their livelihoods.



In this regard, the International Fund For Agricultural Development (IFAD) provided a grant to ICIMOD to convene an [international symposium](#) on ‘Transitioning shifting cultivation to resilient farming systems in South and Southeast Asia’ (held in Guwahati, India in June 2019) and prepare a series of knowledge products, including a resource book and guidelines for transitioning shifting cultivation to resilient farming systems. The resource book and policy briefs provide an

overview of the impacts on food availability, ecosystem services and security of tenure in the shift to settled agricultural systems, outlining approaches that can help avoid the negative fallout of transition and serve as guidelines for policy makers and practitioners.

ICIMOD and IFAD will be launching these knowledge products at the webinar.

## Tentative agenda

Time	Programme description	Speakers
11:00-11:25	<b>Welcome</b>  <b>Opening remarks</b>  Why is managing change in shifting cultivation important to IFAD?  Why is managing change in shifting cultivation important to ICIMOD?	Moderated by: <b>Roshan Cooke</b> , Country Director, Asia Pacific Division (APR), IFAD  <b>Nigel Brett</b> , Director, Asia Pacific Division (APR), IFAD  <b>Pema Gyamtsho</b> , Director General, ICIMOD
11:25-11:35	Challenges in transitioning shifting cultivation to settled agriculture: Addressing second-generation issues of transition	<b>Dhrupad Choudhury</b> , Chief, Scaling Operations ICIMOD
11:35-11:50	<b>Launch of knowledge products</b>  <b><i>Transitioning shifting cultivation to resilient farming systems in South and Southeast Asia (Resource book)</i></b> – Marie-Aude Evens, Senior Technical Specialist in Agronomy (PMI) IFAD will introduce the book and highlight its relevance and importance, Nigel Brett and Pema Gyamtsho will jointly launch the resource book  <b><i>Supporting Myanmar’s land governance reforms (Policy brief)</i></b> – Harold Liversage, Lead Technical Specialist in Land Tenure (PMI), IFAD will introduce the policy brief and speak on why land tenure is central to poverty alleviation and resilience building  <b><i>Ensuring seasonal food availability and dietary diversity during and after transition of shifting cultivation systems to settled agriculture (Policy brief)</i></b> – Antonella Cordone, Senior Technical Specialist in Nutrition (ECG), IFAD will introduce the policy brief and speak on the importance of ensuring seasonal food availability and dietary diversity for nutritional security  <b><i>Shifting cultivation landscapes in transition: Where are the forests? (Policy brief)</i></b> – Marie-Aude Evens, IFAD will introduce the policy brief and speak on the impacts of transitions on ecosystem services	
11:50-12:00	<b>Closing remarks and way forward</b>	<b>Nigel Brett</b> , Director, APR IFAD and <b>Izabella Koziell</b> , Deputy Director General, ICIMOD

If you are interested in attending this webinar, please register [here](#).

### For further information

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