Effects of institutional change since the mid 90ies on community forestry in Bolivia´s Amazon region
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1 The Research Framework and the study region

Since 1996, CIFOR is coordinating a research program in the northern Bolivian Amazon, funded mainly by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The research project is named "Saneamiento de la tierra" (Land Sanitation) and is aimed at improving land ownership, access to and use of natural forest resources. The project is being conducted in cooperation with the National Institute of Forest Policy (IFP) of the University of Freiburg/Germany, as one of CIFOR’s program partners.

Currently, IFP is assessing the effects of legal and administrative innovations introduced by the Bolivian government since the early 1990ies. The focus is on effects for the roughly 300 rural community lands of the roughly 300 rural communities in the northern Amazon who are community forest management (SZD) or "Communal Peasant Land" (TCO) and "Original Communal Land" (for indigenous communities, abbreviated in Spanish as TCO) and "Communal Peasant Land"

2 Institutional Change: Intention of the Bolivian government

The institutional changes have enabled improved access of local populations to forest resources. But the impact of the institutional reforms is still questioned due to the large number of problems faced by rural communities. Public administration has not yet adapted to the new legal situation and to the socio-economic conditions of Bolivia's Amazon region.

3 Institutional Changes in the agrarian and forest property rights

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4 Comparison of the land area distributed to peasant communities until the mid 90ies and afterwards

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5 Empirical Findings: Current problems of rural communities

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6 Conclusions

- The institutional changes have enabled improved access of local populations to forest resources. But the impact of the institutional reforms is still questioned due to the large number of problems faced by rural communities. Public administration has not yet adapted to the new legal situation and to the socio-economic conditions of Bolivia's Amazon region.

- Due to the strengthening of community representatives in commercial forest use, the presence of social conflicts within the communities and their dependencies of forest sector enterprises, it is conceivable that conventional logging of timber will increase in forests on communal lands.