

# 4 Social Forestry in Bhutan

Social forestry and community forestry are a new concept in Bhutan and are currently being implemented on an experimental basis. The aim is to regulate and enhance forest productivity, to contribute to sustainable resource utilisation, and to increase farm income by integrating tree growing into existing farming systems. Social forestry involves local people in the process of forest resource management through a system of sharing benefits and responsibilities. Introduction of these new concepts requires fundamental changes in the attitudes of stakeholders including government agencies and staff who have been indoctrinated with the idea that they alone are custodians of the nation's forest resources. Rural communities that traditionally have had unlimited access to adjacent forest areas need to accept new responsibilities and adopt appropriate utilisation systems. There is a need for workshops and training programmes for forestry officials and villagers to create

awareness about the organization of village institutions for community and social forestry programmes.

The RGOB, realising the importance of people's participation in the management of its forest resources, has recently introduced a policy of privatisation and decentralization. As a result, the Forestry Sub-sector has already decentralized the performance of certain forestry functions by allocating them to the district level.

Management Plans have been prepared on an experimental basis by the forest department for four community-managed forests. They are listed in Table 4.

The management plan for Mongar Dzongkhag is being implemented and the rest are under review. A further 22 ha are being managed on small-scale community forestry trial plantations.

Name of Community Forest	Area (ha)
Zhemgang Dzongkhag	250
Punakha Dzongkhag	265
Mongar Dzongkhag	300
Trashigang Dzongkhag	537
Total	1152