Forest cooperative societies: land consolidation of jointly owned community forests in NRW, Germany

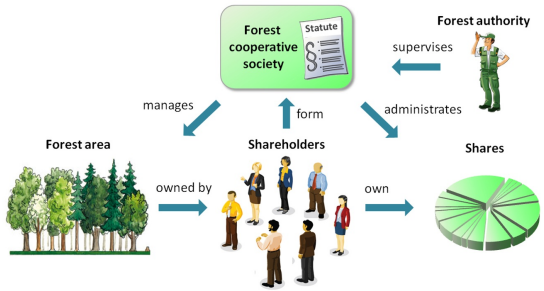


Figure 1 *Legal status of the FCS according to the NRW GWG (adapted from Ewers 2015)*

Forest land consolidations can enhance the land ownership structure of small-scale private forests and reactivate the forest use.

A forest cooperative society (FCS, in German Waldgenossenschaft) is a type of joint private forest ownership, which is generally termed community forest. As such, it is not to be confused with communal forest, which is forest owned by a commune or a town. Community forests have existed in Europe already for centuries in manifold traditional forms and have survived in many regions until today. The main characteristic of community forest compared to other forms of forest ownership is that the owners do not own a particular land parcel of a forest area, but an ideal share of the whole cooperative property, which can be understood as a share of a stock market (Figure 1).

Based on the unique legal framework of the Community Forest Act GWG of NRW, this special land consolidation achieves a legal merger of community forests and private owners into a larger forest cooperative society (Waldgenossenschaft) for the purpose of improving the conditions for forest management and administration, which goes beyond the readjustment of land parcels per single landowner. The degree of the merger and the benefits for collaborative SFM are thus enhanced compared to conventional land consolidations. Various supporting measures, such as road constructions, silvicultural improvements or landscape interventions are included to generate additional sustainable impacts in the region.

In the federal state North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), community forests are an important forest ownership type. The original community forests were based on century-old laws, which were all unified and redefined as forest cooperative societies (FCS) in the Community Forest Act (Gemeinschaftswaldgesetz, GWG) of 1975. Today there exist 270 FCS with circa 42,000 ha and an estimated 17,500 forest owners as shareholders. A specific aspect of the NRW GWG is that it permits a special procedure, based partly on the land consolidation act, to merge several FCS into a new, larger FCS to improve the conditions for forestry and administration. The specificity is that not only a readjustment of land property, but also a merger of ownership is achieved in one procedure. Such a combined procedure can enhance the degree and effect of the FLC even more compared to a conventional consolidation, which essentially reduces only the number of land parcels, but not the number of landowners.

MER INFORMATION

UTMANING SOM ADRESSERAS

3. Aktivera privata ägare och kooperativ skogsförvaltning

DOMäN

Ägarskap, samarbete

Skogsförvaltning, skogskjötsel, ekosystemtjänster

TYPE AV LöSNING

Landreform

NYCKELORD

--

DIGITAL LöSNING

Nej

INNOVASION

Ja

UPPHOVSLAND

Tyskland

POTENTIAL

Lokal

START OCH SLUTåR

--

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REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

HEMSIDA (HUVUDSIDA)

http://bit.ly/kies2017

PROJEKTETS HEMSIDA

http://simwood.efi.int

PROJEKTREFERENS

SIMWOOD - FP7 grant 613762, 2013-2017

RESURSER

NRW pilot project report

LOGO FöR BEST PRACTICE

LOGO, HUVUDORGANISATION

PROJEKT SOM DETTA FACTSHEET SKAPATS INOM

Rosewood 4.0

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