Meeting Notes
Core Expert Group on Forest Governance Data Collection
Brussels, 28–29 November 2012

Summary

On 28 and 29 November 2012, FAO, with EFI, PROFOR, the ACP-FLEGT Programme, and the UN-REDD Programme, convened a core group of fifteen experts (listed in Annex I) to discuss creation of a resource for forest governance data collection and assessment. The meeting produced a detailed outline/table of contents for a practical guide to measuring forest governance for assessments or monitoring (Annex II), and also discussed production of the resource, including gathering of case studies. A consultant will write a draft of the resource, which this core group of experts will review at a second meeting.

Background

This meeting was a follow-up to a June 2012 meeting in Rome, where thirty-five international and national experts heard presentations on country experiences, discussed common issues in governance assessment, and considered the value of producing resource materials for people measuring forest governance. The participants agreed that guidance would be useful and proposed a plan for producing it collaboratively, using a small panel working in close coordination with a consulting author.

Objectives and Scope of the Guidance

The group's work began with consideration of the objectives and the scope of the guidance document. The sense of the meeting was that the output should not prescribe best practices, but should describe a range of practices.

The group realized that it would be useful to describe the demand for guidance: who wants it and why? In a wide-ranging discussion, the group realized that the potential "who" is varied. People commissioning assessments, people actually designing or carrying out assessments, people participating in assessments or data collection as stakeholders, and people making decisions based on assessments may all be interested in guidance, but they have different needs. It was noted that these different groups of users were all in fact "practitioners" of forest governance assessments. Further, people may be undertaking assessments for various reasons: to meet requirements of processes (such as those associated with REDD+ or FLEGT), or to advance reforms as advocates. The potential users may be

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from government or civil society. They may be experienced in assessments and monitoring or not; they may be from local, national or international groups.

The group decided it wanted a short and simple statement of objectives, focused on giving practical advice. A small group of volunteers offered to work on the statement of objectives over lunch.

The group then considered the scope of the document and its niche. There are other documents and resources on governance assessment or monitoring generally, and there are documents that explain how to conduct one specific type of forest governance assessment or monitoring. This resource will be limited to measuring forest governance, but it will present information of use to people taking a variety of approaches.

The group considered whether the document would just discuss data collection, or whether it would also discuss data analysis and perhaps even policymaking based on that analysis. It was decided that it is impossible to entirely separate data collection from the rest of the assessment process, and that the guide should also discuss design of the assessment process, data collection, and the eventual use and dissemination of the results of assessment.

In describing these aspects of measuring forest governance, the group found itself using terms in different ways and realized a need to adopt common definitions of words like "data collection", "assessment", "monitoring", "research", "diagnosis", and "reporting". The group also agreed that to be widely useful, the output should be written in simple language.

In the afternoon, the group considered the objectives offered by the small volunteer committee. After some discussion, the group arrived at these objectives:

A Practical Guide on Assessing and Monitoring Forest Governance

• Provide practitioners with practical guidance on how to design, implement and use forest governance assessment and monitoring (planning, collection, analysis, and use of data).

•Present existing approaches and methodologies and promote sharing of experiences.

Further, the guide should be a "sister document" to the Framework for Assessing and Monitoring Forest Governance produced in 2011.

The group then briefly considered what resources would be available to support production of the guide, and noted that it might be good to "pilot" a working draft of the guide and make improvements based on early feedback. The availability of time, funding, and a willing test subject for piloting was unclear. The second meeting of the core group may revisit this topic.

Format and Contents

Next, the group talked about the format of the guide. The group recognized that many forms were available, including publishing the guide as a bound volume, a loose-leaf collection, a compact disc, or a website. There was some discussion of the costs of updating a loose-leaf collection or website. There was general agreement that it would be good to have both an electronic and print version.

The group considered aspects of format that would make the guide more useful. It would be good to have overviews written to be accessible to many kinds of users, in addition to the more technical parts offered for practitioners. It would be good to have many case examples. It would be good to have a professional editor/designer lay out the publication. It might be good to vet the guide in several ways: through peer review, through piloting, or through use in trainings, for example—although decisions on vetting will not be made until the next meeting of this group.

The group heard presentations on what the June meeting produced concerning issues to be covered and on the table of contents for the guide. Then the group turned to detailed discussion of the table of contents. During the course of discussion, the participants offered many ideas relevant to the overall contents of the guide:

- The guide should give people the information they need to make an informed choice among possible approaches to measuring forest governance.
- The guide should profile several approaches. It should be useful to people who want to find a complete approach "off the shelf" that they can use and also to people who want to develop their own approach, customize existing approaches, or experiment with new approaches.
- The guide should not ignore the political economy of reform or the power that comes from controlling data.
- The guide should present "golden rules" or "rules of thumb" — easily remembered pieces of wisdom that are widely applicable to data collection and assessment.
- The structure of the guide should allow people to quickly turn to the topic and level of detail that they need. The language should be simple and accessible. Detailed discussions of particular tools can go in annexes.

On the morning of the second day of the meeting, the group broke into three sub-groups to produce the detailed outline in Annex II. The subgroups reported back to the full group.

The group then talked about the length of the guide. There was agreement that the guide should be no more than 100 pages. The guide should start with an

overview section of perhaps 10 pages. The more technical section of the guide should then follow, but there was no consensus on whether this should take about 20 to 30 pages or 50 pages. The remainder of the guide should be annexes.

Templates and Cases

The group discussed the creation of templates to collect case studies of assessment tools and their application, and the use of those case studies. It was decided that the templates should reflect the organization of the table of contents, asking questions about the subjects in the main headings. The details of the template will be left to the compiler of the guide.

The first draft of the guide should draw on perhaps ten or twelve cases as examples. The main text could refer to these, or relevant parts of them could be described in boxes, while more complete descriptions or overviews could be placed in the annexes. After the first draft is available for review, the reviewers may be able to suggest additional cases to include, and the list could grow each time the guide is revised.

Timing

It was agreed that the reporter/consultant should be instructed to have a rough draft of the guide complete in time for a second core group meeting in late March or early April. Before that meeting, the reporter should vet early drafts with the subgroups that worked on each section of the outline. The reporter may need to call on additional experts to contribute to some of the technical parts of the guide.

The process should produce a second draft for circulation to the original full expert group later in 2013. Meanwhile, matters of peer review, dissemination, translation, and similar topics remain to be decided. The core group should remain generally engaged in the process. Bob Simpson, Nalin Kishor, and Crystal Davis were asked to find examples of similar guides, and to look for assessments of the use of different formats and guides, to bring to the next meeting of the core group. Emelyne Cheney, Ken Rosenbaum, and Saskia Ozinga were identified as a potential group to investigate options for dissemination.

The meeting adjourned late on Thursday afternoon, 29 November.

Summary of next steps

Coordination

Task	Who is Responsible	Timing
Commit further funding to the effort	Planning group (FAO, PROFOR, UN-REDD, World Bank, etc.)	January
Retain consultant(s) to write draft	Planning group	January
Circulate meeting report	Reporter	Early January
Keep larger expert group informed of progress	Reporter	As needed, beginning with distribution of meeting notes in January
Plan for second core group meeting in spring	Planning group	January–February
Plan for larger expert group meeting in summer	Planning group	March–April
Decide whose logos will appear on publication	Members of the core group	Second core group meeting

Templates and collection of case studies

Task	Who is Responsible	Timing
Circulate draft templates for comment	Reporter	Early January
Comment on templates	Core group	January
Pilot templates using some of the cases listed in Annex III	Consultant	Late January
Nominate additional cases	Core group	Ongoing

Production of draft

Task	Who is Responsible	Timing
Research formats of similar guides	Bob Simpson, with Nalin Kishor and Crystal Davis	January
Propose means of dissemination	Emelyne Cheney, with Ken Rosenbaum and Saskia Ozinga	January–February
Produce draft	Consultant(s)	January–Mid-March
Give early feedback on sections covering objectives and planning	Saskia Ozinga, Ewald Rametsteiner, Crystal Davis	February–March
Give early feedback on	Jo van Brusselyn, Emelyne	February–March

sections covering methods and data collection	Cheney, Filippo del Gatto, Nguyen Quang Tan, Boris Romaniuk	
Give early feedback on sections covering analysis, application, and improvement	Tina Hageberg, Nalin Kishor, Steve Nsita, Ken Rosenbaum	February–March
Attend second core group meeting	Core group	Late March or April

Annex I: Participants

Name and affiliation of core group participants

Bob Simpson, FAO
Ewald Rametsteiner, FAO
Nalin Kishor, PROFOR
Jo van Brusselyn, EFI
Tina Hageberg, UNDP/UN-REDD
Emelyne Cheney, FAO/UN-REDD
Crystal Davis, WRI
Saskia Ozinga/Rudi Kohnert, FERN
Filippo del Gatto, consultant, Ecuador
Boris Romaniuk, St. Petersburg Forestry Research Institute, Russia
Steve Nsita, consultant, Uganda
Nguyen Quang Tan, RECOFTC, Vietnam
Ken Rosenbaum, reporter
Guido Broekhoven, facilitator

Annex II: Table of Contents

This is the table of contents/outline for the heart of the guide. It does not include an introductory overview or the additional materials in the guide's annexes.

I. Objectives and context

- Understand context
    - Windows of opportunity (policy developments, elections, international processes, political willingness)—are there any?
    - Risks

- - Past or current governance assessment/monitoring initiatives, consider added value, potential costs/benefits of undertaking a new process, availability of funding
  - Problem analysis—priorities?
  - Ownership & power dynamics: choices about who to consult/include/exclude in the process, understanding the implications for local power dynamics and influence targets
- Set objectives
  - Give examples of different types of objectives and explain how objectives influence to the type of assessment or monitoring process you will undertake (e.g., diagnostics, evaluation, monitoring, repeat vs. one-off)
    - Setting a baseline for future monitoring
    - Setting up a governance monitoring system / building monitoring capacity
    - Monitoring governance impacts of a program/policy/process
    - Inform a specific policy/administrative/law process (e.g. forest law reform)
    - Diagnosing governance causes of a known problem
  - Guidance on what makes a good objective
    - Specific, focused, achievable, time-bound
    - Clarify whether it is a process or content objective, or both
  - Guidance on the objective-setting process
    - The process should be transparent, coordinate, inclusive (degree of transparency, coordination/participation needed may vary, e.g. for government vs. NGO)
    - Set clear expectations, roles, and responsibilities for the objective setting process
    - Articulate the problem (restrict ambitions/focus): e.g., forest infractions, quality of participation in a specific process, government coordination in concession allocation, budget management/expenditure & revenue control
    - Explain how assessment/monitoring will help you overcome the problem – what is the expected impact/outcome?
    - Articulate who needs to be involved to achieve the impact/outcome – who will directly use the results? who will be influenced by the results?
    - Integrate socio-cultural and gender aspects into objective-setting process and final objectives
- Gauge resources — reality check!
  - Estimate available financial resources and likely costs, including long-term cost if not one-off (provide examples of costs of past efforts of various magnitude)
  - Timeline (note: consultation is time intensive)
  - Human resources (quantity, expertise, pros/cons of consultants, training needs)

II. Planning the assessment / monitoring effort

- Define the main parameters of data collection
  - Key questions, information needs, and ways to get information
  - Geographic & time scope
  - Target population
  - Frequency of monitoring (make sure this is balanced relative to how the timeframe for each monitoring effort)
  - Select a general methodological approach for data collection (different from defining specific methodologies, just a general overview necessary for budgeting exercise)
- Create a budget and time-bound work plan
  - Provide examples of budgets with line items and cost estimates/ranges based on past experience
  - Provide examples of work plans with time estimates/ranges based on past experience
  - Secure a sustainable flow of funds
- Recruit key staff
  - Defining key roles, responsibilities, and expertise/skills needed
- Plan the stakeholder engagement process
  - Who needs to be engaged and why? Who will be excluded and why?
  - Develop approaches for engaging and communicating with each stakeholder group, including gender sensitive strategies
  - Create time-bound engagement plan: what role for each stakeholder group in each stage of the assessment/monitoring process

III. Defining the method

  - Identifying data needs
  - Identify existing data and its sources; unavailable data would need a method development
  - Review broad methodological options to collect data and select overall assessment approach (e.g. qualitative / quantitative / mixed / participatory)
  - Selection of research approach
  - Indicator design/selection
    - Different type indicators
      - input, process, output, outcome
      - Indicator for diagnostics and monitoring
    - Quality of indicators (SMART) — how to get to it?
    - Reference to existing indicators, methods
    - Consistency, comprehensiveness and organisation of indicator set (robustness of set relative to objective of the assessment)

- Means of verification (MoV: you verify where to get the data for the indicator)
- Scoring of indicators (what, why, is normative)
    - Select empirical methods of collection & designing data collection tools
        - Comparative presentation of different methods and tools (including which methods are suited for which indicators)
    - Validating choice of methods
        - Pilot testing of methodology (test and revise: iterative process)
        - Stakeholder consultation
        - Includes validating the sampling

IV. Undertaking data collection

- Identify geographical focus
    - Ensure representativeness
    - Consistency with objectives
- Formation of data collection team
    - Composition
    - Capacity building
    - Preparation of data collection manual
- Do's and don'ts
- Logistical preparatory work
    - Get permission to collect data (administrative issues, social issues)
    - Consider possible consequences for sources
- How to carry out primary data collection effort
- How to carry out secondary data collection
- Ethical conduct of data collection and handling
- Stakeholder engagement
- Verification/triangulation/cleaning

V. Interpretation & analysis

- Making findings (linked to process objectives and appropriate to data sets)
- Stakeholder validation of interpretation/findings (use of stakeholder representatives)
- Data management, including managing access to data (databases, updating, archiving)

VI. Application of the results

- Publication & communication/outreach
    - Placing results in accessible formats

- Targeting the audience—Making results available to desired audience—including "launch"—making recommendations for action
- Advertizing the availability of the results
  o Moving from assessment to action
  - Capacity needs assessments (of audience) on how to use the data/possible trainings
  - Institutionalization: who will carry on with assessments?

VII. Learning and improvement

o Self-evaluation (internal, soon after completing the process)
o Being open to feed-back from others/Institutionalized feedback mechanism
o Schedule follow-up evaluation (considering if desired impacts achieved)

Annex III: Cases and initiatives

Below is a list of forest governance monitoring initiatives that were referred to in the meeting, including reference to countries where methodologies have been or will be tested.

World Bank/PROFOR/FAO
- [Framework for assessing and monitoring forest governance](#) (not itself a monitoring initiative, but a voluntary standard to use in talking about forest governance).

World Bank/PROFOR
- [Forest Governance Monitoring Diagnostics Toolkit](#) (Versions tested in Uganda, Burkina Faso, and Russia; FCPF pilot testing of the toolkit in Liberia and Lao during 2013)

FAO
- Work on strengthening monitoring in five countries: Vietnam, Tanzania, Zambia, Peru, and Ecuador
- The ACP FLEGT programme may produce some situational examples.

UNDP
- Institutional context analysis

UN-REDD

- REDD+ corruption risk assessment (Kenya, Philippines): builds on some components of Transparency International
- PGA for REDD+ (Indonesia, Vietnam, Ecuador, Nigeria (?))

WRI
- Governance of Forest Initiative (GFI) (Brazil, Cameroon, Indonesia and Peru (by partner organisation)
- REDD-SES: Social Environmental Standards for REDD (Mexico, Nepal, Ecuador, Indonesia)

Forest Trends
- Poverty Impact Assessment (PIA) testing potentially in Honduras (Filippo del Gatto with Forest Trends (Mary Hobley and Michael Richards)), Ghana, Vietnam, Indonesia

FERN
- VPA governance monitoring (Ghana, Indonesia, RoC, Vietnam)
- Civil Society monitoring (Indonesia, Cameroon/ Central African Region, Liberia)

EFI
- VPA Impact Monitoring (methodology to be developed for each VPA partner country)

Other governance monitoring or standards mentioned:
- **OECD** Bribery Convention: peer review process
- **UNEP/Interpol** LEAF programme (early on implementation)
- **EITI** – Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (Oil, gas and mining are the sectors that countries typically cover in their EITI agreements, however of VPA countries, Liberia has included forest and agricultural sectors. Other VPA countries that are EITI compliant or candidate have not included forestry to date (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Ghana, Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Republic of the Congo, Gabon).
- **Global Witness** (Cameroon Ghana Liberia Peru Ecuador Guatemala DRC)
- **Chatham House** Illegal Logging and Related Trade: Indicators of the Global Response (Brazil, Cameroon, Ghana, Indonesia, Malaysia)
- The **Montreal Process** includes governance as one of its seven criteria to be monitored. The participating countries are Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Russian Federation, United States of America, and Uruguay.
- The **Forest Governance Learning Group** has initiatives in Vietnam and other countries.

- The **Climate, Community, and Biodiversity Alliance** (CCBA) Standards apply at the project level and include criteria for legal status, property rights, and community impact.
- The **International Model Forests Network** includes governance as one of six attributes that model forests posess. These attributes apply on the level of a landscape, not a country, and must be customized for each forest.
- The **International Forestry Resources and Institutions (IFRI) Network** is a group of twelve institutions doing research on how institutions and governance affect forests.
- **CIFOR** has developed guidelines for developing, testing, and selecting criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.
- The **ITTO** has sustainable forest management criteria and indicators.
- **WWF Russia** did a study on governance and illegal logging.