

Report of PGA “Step-Down” Workshop organized by Cross River State Forestry Commission

1. Introduction and Background

In April 2012, three delegates from Nigeria attended a Participatory Governance Assessment (PGA) International Exchange Workshop in Bogor (Indonesia). The Nigerian delegates to the International Exchange Workshop were Odigha Odigh, Chairman of Cross River State Forestry Commission (CRSFC); Sylvanus Abua representing civil society organizations in Cross River State; and Ochuko Odibo.

Following the delegates’ participation in the workshop, Cross River State Forestry Commission expressed the need to transfer the learning acquired during the workshop to REDD+ stakeholders in Cross River State where REDD+ will be piloted in Nigeria. Financial support for “step-down” of the PGA Workshop was provided by Cross River State Forestry Commission.

The PGA “step-down” workshop followed the same agenda and methodology used in the PGA International Exchange Workshop. Annex A at the end of the report presents the workshop agenda. However, discussions and group work focused on the situation in Nigeria, and how to apply the lessons from other PGA pilot countries to improve forest governance in Nigeria, in general, and Cross River State in particular.

This report has been prepared for information sharing with REDD+ stakeholders at the state, national and international levels. This report draws on key insights presented in the report of the PGA International Exchange Workshop prepared by UNDP Indonesia.

The rest of the report is organized as follows:

- Section 2 identifies the purpose and objectives of the PGA step-down workshop;
- Section 3 provides information about groups and institutions that the workshop participants represent;
- Section 4 highlights the main discussed in each of the sessions;
- Section 5 outlines follow-up action identified during the two-day step-down workshop.

2. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the workshop is to step-down PGA related knowledge and skills Nigerian delegates acquired during the PGA International Exchange Workshop held in Indonesia from 17-18 April 2012.

The organisers of the two-day “step-down” workshop expected that at the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Identify the relevance of PGA for the Nigeria REDD+ programme
- Identify the steps in conducting a PGA process
- Share some of the early lessons from PGA processes in other pilot countries with more stakeholders in Nigeria

- Adapt some of the additional tools (such as Institutional and Context Analysis and FPIC) introduced during the International Exchange Workshop in Indonesia for their work in Nigeria.
- Contribute meaningfully to any PGA process in Nigeria in due course

3. Participants and Resource Persons

In total, 79 participants attended the two-day workshop. Participants represented staff of Cross River State Forestry Commission (CRSFC), ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) in Cross River State, civil society organisations, forest-dependent communities, academia and Cross River State House of Assembly. **Annex A** at the end of the report presents the attendance sheet that was kept during the workshop.

The workshop was facilitated by the three Nigerian delegates to the PGA International Exchange Workshop in Indonesia. These are: Members of the Climate Change Working Group at the University of Calabar also provided facilitation support during focus group discussions.

4. Key issues addressed and discussed during the workshop

4.1 Opening session:

The opening session had two sub-sessions: the opening remarks by Odigha Odigha, Chairman of CRSFC; and an overview of the workshop by Sylvanus Abua. During the opening remarks, Odigha explained that the step-down workshop was organised as a means of reporting back to Cross River State stakeholders the PGA workshop held in Indonesia in April 2012. He suggested that whenever delegates attend workshop outside their workplaces, they should endeavor to transfer the learning to their colleagues.

Sylvanus Abua provided an overview of the workshop and highlighted the purpose and objectives of the workshop as outlined in Section 2 above. The objectives of the step-down workshop were adaptations of the objectives of the PGA International Exchange Workshop. The objectives of the step-down workshop focused on how to apply the learning from the exchange workshop to the situation in Nigeria, considering the current status of the PGA process in Nigeria.

The opening session of the workshop ended with some clarification of the meaning of governance. The following UNDP definition of governance was provided as a working definition of governance within the context of the PGA process:

“Governance is the system of values, policies, and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and private sector. It is the way a society organizes itself to make and implement decisions – achieving mutual understanding, agreement and action. It comprises the mechanisms and processes for citizens and groups to articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations. It is the rules, institutions and practices that set limits and provide incentives for individuals, organisations and firms. Governance, including its social, political and economic dimensions, operates at every level of human enterprise, be it the household, village, municipality, nation, region or globe”.

4.2 Governance assessments in a broader perspective:

The presentations during this session built on the experience and knowledge gained from the PGA International Exchange Workshop in Indonesia, as well as previous and on-going governance assessments under the UNDP Global Programme on Governance Assessment led by the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, as well as FAO's expertise on forest governance and data collection, reflections and lessons learned from the various efforts.

4.3 Insights into the four PGA pilots

Ochuko Odibo relayed the experiences of the four PGA pilots. A summary of insights from the four pilot countries is presented below:

- In **Indonesia**, one of the key messages was that it is important to ensure strong buy-in from government. It is also important to allocate sufficient time for soliciting the government's buy-in. The presentation from Indonesia also highlighted the need to find a balance between reporting evidence and avoiding 'naming and shaming' when conducting research aimed at collecting and sharing governance data..
- In **Ecuador**, one of the main points was the need to integrate the PGA into other on-going processes on governance and safeguards to ensure coordination and increase the efficiency of the REDD+ process. With respect to Nigeria, it is important to identify such processes at the local, state and national levels for integration of the PGA process. An example of such as process is the programme of Budget Transparency and Accountability Network (BTAN), which is addressing accountability and transparency issues in the budget process in Cross River State.
- **Nigeria** stressed that the PGA process needs to be driven both at the national and state/ local level in order to ensure it has an eventual impact and has the potential to expand beyond a single state. Such a structure will align with the REDD+ Readiness programme given that it will be implemented at both national and sub-national levels.
- From **Vietnam**, the link between the PGA process and possible input to establishing a system for reporting on safeguards was highlighted.

4.4 Context, process, and strategic issues in a PGA

During this session facilitated by Odigha Odigha, participants were given insights into how the Stakeholder Engagement (SE) and Free Prior and Inform Consent (FPIC) Guidelines have been developed and how they can be applied. The Guidelines on SE and on FPIC, respectively, are two available tools developed through extensive consultations.

Institutional and Context Analysis (ICA) was presented to shed light on how it may complement the PGA process. The ICA is an approach with four simple steps to analyse effectively the enabling and disabling environment within which a project or programme aims to operate, map and better understand stakeholders, identify entry points and define and mitigate risks related to any given development support initiative. ICA goes one step further than usual stakeholder analysis, by identifying the incentives that motivate each group of stakeholders, and placing them on a graph based on their interests and power relations – which will guide decisions on how to engage with each relevant stakeholder group.

4.5 What to Measure

This session emphasized how priority information needs can be identified in a PGA process, and also the data required to provide relevant information.

The experience of the PGA pilot in Indonesia was demonstrated, this time on how the scope of the assessment was identified in a participatory manner. The scope of the PGA in Indonesia is closely related to natural resources and forestry management. To better understand the scope of the PGA in Indonesia, three aspects of governance required mapping: 1) laws and regulations; 2) capacity of the government, CSOs, communities and the private sector, and finally, 3) implementation and performance.

Feedback from participants focused on the need to measure improvement forest governance in Cross River State, using the anti-deforestation campaign of the Cross River State Forestry Commission as a test case. Some participants expressed the opinion that effectiveness of the anti-deforestation campaign can be used as an indicator of how REDD+ could check deforestation in Cross River State. Based on anecdotal evidence, most participants felt that the anti-deforestation campaign in Cross River State needs significant improvement. According to one participant, despite the ban on logging, the rate of timber exploitation in Cross River State has remained high. Participants provided the following recommendations for checking deforestation in Cross River State:

- The anti-corruption campaign should be community-driven because the government's policy targets enforcement at the community level. The campaign should focus on getting more people at the grassroots committed to the campaign and overall protection of the forest; it would be easier to check all forms of corruption related to forest resources utilization and management.
- Anti-deforestation campaign will work better if communities set up forest guards to protect the community forests while the government forest guards monitor and protects the government resources.
- In order to increase the stock of trees on our forest landscape, there is need for a massive afforestation programme in Cross River State and the rest of Nigeria.

At the end of the session on *Insights into the four PGA Pilot*, participants observed that Nigeria is the only country that is yet to identify forest governance issues that should be addressed in the PGA process. During group work on *What to Measure*, participants identified the following governance issues that should be addressed in the PGA process.

1. Legislation and law enforcement
2. Socioeconomic characteristics of forest dependent communities such as income level, and level of dependence on forest resources
3. Incidence of corruption
4. Record keeping
5. Financial system
6. Programme performance appraisal
7. Women's participation in decision making
8. Involvement of community groups in decision making
9. Mechanism for benefits sharing
10. Existing information dissemination strategies

In addition to these issues, participants identified the following governance risks that are specific to Nigeria: corruption; widespread poverty in Nigeria; inconsistent policy-making processes; weak institutional structures; slow decision making processes

4.6 How to measure

This session focused on how to measure forest governance. Discussions during the session focused on how to measure the aspects of forest governance specific to Nigeria. During group work, participants identified how PGA data could be collected; how to make the process participatory; and how to ensure data quality.

During plenary, participants suggested that PGA data could be collected using questionnaires, focus group discussions and town hall meetings. Participants identified the following sources of data: government ministries, departments and agencies (e.g. Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment, Federal Department of Forestry, Federal Office of Statistics and National Population Commission), international organizations (such as UNDP, UNEP and FAO), the university and research institutes, NGOs/CBOs and private sectors companies.

With respect to promoting participatory approaches in data collection, participants identified the following approaches:

- Involving a wide range of stakeholders (including local communities) in designing the tools in workshop settings. Stakeholders participants identified represent government, civil society, local communities and the private sector.
- Careful selection of tools to ensure meaningful involvement of women and other marginalized groups. Focus group discussions and use of pocket charts/opinion boxes provide opportunities for meaningful involvement of women and other marginalized groups.
- Use of simple and practical approaches (for example, PRA) that involve games and other practical tools.

Data quality control measures suggested by participants include: data checking daily by supervisors; use of unbiased data collectors; pretesting of data collection tools; use of professional researchers to collect data; establishing link between the research team at the national level and international coordinators /experts; verification of data collected and analysed; and adherence to the principle of triangulation. The principle of triangulation implies that data is collected using more than method and from a wide range of stakeholders.

4.7 What to do with the data

The key message from the PGA workshop in Indonesia and the step-down training in Calabar is that the PGA process should be linked to policy making. During the step-down workshop, participants identified the need to disseminate PGA data for active use by government and civil societies through print and electronic media, preparation of reports, ICT (making data available online), bulletins and production of IEC materials summarizing the key findings from the PGA process.

Participants also identified the need to prepare a summary of the PGA data for use by MDAs at the state and national level to inform their policy development and review. PGA data can become the evidence for advocating for policy change. Some participants also identified the need to publish summary results of the PGA process in daily newspapers and on the Internet.

5. Follow-up

Based on feedback from the group, discussions and comments made in the plenary, there are several points to be followed up closely. This will ensure improved communication between the PGA practitioners, as well as demonstration of how and when different initiatives, tools and approaches may be included in a PGA cycle. Follow-up actions identified by participants are outlined below:

- Summarizing the content of the group work and circulate among stakeholders. The summary in the form of a communiqué could be sent to media houses as well as heads of ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) of government at the state and federal levels.
- Continue to educate local communities on the need to protect our forests. The education programme could focus on avoiding wildfire, logging of trees and better farming practices.
- Re-orient local communities on the need to return back to the traditional practice of planting a tree when a child is born.
- Introducing REDD+ into our school curriculum and also link-up with environmental clubs or climate change clubs in schools.
- Pressing for the development of REDD+ legislation.
- Informally share the lessons from this workshop with colleagues, friends and community members as applicable.