Terms of Reference for members of a core group to provide oversight for the development of guidance for forest governance data-collection

1. **Background**

Recognizing the need for a comprehensive analytical framework for forest governance monitoring and assessments, the FAO and the World Bank have collaborated with several organizations (WRI, Chatham House, EFI, UN-REDD, etc.) to develop a generic framework for possible use and adaptation by countries. The resulting [Framework for Assessing and Monitoring Forest Governance](#) (hereafter "Framework") was released in May 2011 at an international seminar.

The Framework is now being applied in several national contexts, along with other tools and initiatives aiming to monitor or assess the quality of forest governance. The FAO is working with the Framework in Tanzania, Vietnam, Zambia, Peru and Ecuador to strengthen governance monitoring structures in the context of national forest monitoring. The World Bank has supported use of the Framework to conduct forest governance assessments in Russia, Burkina Faso and Uganda. The UN-REDD Program is using the FAO-WB Framework in four pilot countries where Participatory Governance Assessments for REDD+ are taking place: Ecuador, Indonesia, Nigeria and Vietnam. WRI has piloted the first version of its Governance of Forests Toolkit, i.e. a framework of indicators for assessing governance in the forest sector, in Brazil, Cameroon and Indonesia. Chatham House also embarked on a new phase to measure the international response to illegal logging, targeted at a set of producer, processing and consumer countries.

These (and other initiatives) provide a rich body of experiences which need to be harvested for key lessons learned and advice to would-be measurers, assessors and monitors of forest governance. To share experiences and discuss needs for guidance in forest governance data collection, on 6 & 7 June 2012, FAO, with PROFOR, the ACP-FLEGT Program, and the UN-REDD Program, convened a group of thirty-five international and national experts. The group heard presentations on country experiences, discussed common issues in governance assessment, and considered the utility of producing resource materials for assessment practitioners.

The participants agreed that further guidance would be useful and proposed a plan for producing it collaboratively using a small expert panel working in close coordination with a consulting author. It was further agreed that FAO and the World Bank would take the lead in bringing together a core group of experts to carry out this work, which would be validated by a larger "community of practice" before being tested and applied at country level.

The June 6-7 Rome meeting also produced three important pieces of "early guidance". First it compiled a detailed list of issues identified during the group discussion and additional issues identified after the meeting by review of the meeting presentations (see Annex 1). Second,

another breakout group started to flesh out a table-of-contents (TOC) for the final product ("guidance" or "manual" or "compendium" or "resource-book"). This early draft of the TOC (Annex 2) will be fully fleshed out by a consultant and will provide the foundation for taking the work forward. Third, the meeting came up with a template for practitioners to use in reporting experiences creating and applying governance assessment tools (Annex 3). This information will be used in developing the guidance.

2. Tasks of the core group

It is envisaged that the work of the core group (see annex 4 for core group members) will include two technical meetings. The final product will be launched at a high-level international meeting in the late-spring of 2013.

During the first technical meeting (proposed to be held in Brussels on Nov.28-29, 2012) the group will:

- Discuss and agree on the nature & format of the end product, which should offer both flexibility and interactivity in pointing to existing resources.
- Discuss the fleshed out TOC for its scope and coverage and reach consensus on a finalized version. The group should ensure that the issues captured in Annex 1 are fully considered in the TOC.
- Discuss and agree on how the reporting template (Annex 2) would be reflected in the guidance and how the information gathered (via the template) would be recorded and made accessible.

Based on the outcomes of the first core group meeting, a consultant (to be hired) will draft the guidance document on forest governance data collection.

During the second technical meeting (proposed for late Jan. 2013), the core group will:

- Review the first draft of the guidance document and provide feedback to the consultant towards its finalization.

- Consider validation of the final draft by a larger "community of practice", and its formal launch at the proposed high-level meeting in late spring.

Annex 1: Common issues and challenges

Category: Context of Assessment

Context issues expressly identified by expert group:

- Achieving buy-in or cooperation of the decision-makers in the country
  - How to work without the buy-in of top officials (and understanding implications of doing an assessment without buy-in)
- Financing the effort
- Estimating costs
- Dealing with cross-sectoral concerns
- Having adequate capacity (among assessors and assessed people)
- Clearly defining the objectives of assessment
- Understanding the political economy and cultural sensitivity
  - Considering "ownership" of the process
  - Considering institutional context, i.e. government agencies to collaborate and take the lead in the process
- Considering public awareness

Additional context issues noted in review of meeting presentations:

- Customizing a general protocol or indicator set to the conditions of the country
- Maintaining uniformity while dealing with variations in context within the country
- Reconciling simultaneous but independent assessment projects

Category: Process of assessment

Process issues expressly identified by expert group:

- How to collect the data
- Availability of data
- Which data to collect
- Capacity building for data collectors & informants
- Prioritizing indicators
- Deciding who will collect data
- Interpreting data
- Formulation of indicators
- Overall extent/scale/approach of exercise
- Scoring of indicators
- Interpretation of data
  - Who will interpret it?
  - How will it be interpreted?

Additional process issues noted in review of meeting presentations:

- Determining whether data can be disclosed
- Transparency of the process itself (potentially including transparency of the design of the process)
- Will data be collected regularly and periodically?
    - Will the process be repeated?
    - How will the process be updated between assessments?
- Designing the indicators set
    - Deciding the level of detail of the assessment
    - Avoiding unnecessary complexity/limiting the number of indicators
    - Using indicators that are neither too broad nor too narrow
    - Selecting indicators that will yield useful insights
    - How to formulate indicator questions (examples of good and not so good/ measurable indicators would be useful)
    - Deciding whether to use perception-based or fact-based indicators or both
    - Selecting different indicators depending on the time when the assessment is carried out (i.e. at the very early stage of a policy reform or project implementation – *ex ante* assessment; during the policy implementation – *in itinere* assessement; or after the completion of it – *ex post* assessment)
    - Role of research on refining indicators
- Designing field collection methods
    - Deciding on the source of data: e.g., do you take perception-based data from experts, stakeholders, households, or others? In interviews, in focus groups, in workshops, online? Via traditional measurement (audits, research, M&E methods) or via collaborative processes (workshop scoring).
    - Evaluating possible methods against time & resources available and accuracy required
    - Deciding on the scale of measurement: single national assessment, multiple regional or local assessments, or for that matter, multiple national assessments.
    - Identifying the experts, informants, stakeholders, etc. in a manner that does not introduce bias.
    - Using trusted "objective" parties to collect data
    - Otherwise assuring the independence of the assessment
    - Assuring the safety and ethics of data collectors
- In group scoring of indicators, difficulty in achieving consensus
- Difficulties in statistical treatment of non-quantitative data
- Do you adopt international standards to make comparisons possible?
- Obtaining cooperation of people and agencies outside the forest sector who might impede data collection

Category: Substance of assessment

Substance issues expressly identified by expert group:

- How to assure quality of the data generally
- How to deal with biases of informants
- How to verify data/reduce bias

- How to assure objectivity generally
- How to assure adherence to standards
- How to set the thematic bounds of the assessment
- How to justify/calibrate normative indicators
- How to capture and analyze perceptions.

Additional substance issues noted in review of meeting presentations

- What to do when there is an apparent gap in the data
- How to assure quality of data on sensitive topics, such as illegal logging, when sources are likely unreliable
- Whether to include data on sensitive topics in the assessment at all
- Whether to stratify the data

Category: Use of the assessment

Use issues expressly identified by expert group:

- Placing the results in formats that are easy for all stakeholders to understand and use
- Making those results readily available to potential users
- Promoting and publicizing the availability of the information
- Moving from assessment towards achieving better governance

Annex 2: Initial Thoughts on an Outline for the Guidance

- Planning
  - o Identifying objectives
    - ▪ Scope/Focus (Identifying the problem)
    - ▪ How will results be used and by whom?
    - ▪ Process outcomes (what are we doing, who for and who with)
    - ▪ Diagnostics versus Evaluation vs Monitoring
    - ▪ One-off versus repeated assessment
    - ▪ Roles and responsibilities
    - ▪ Who to engage and when
  - o Understanding context: who, what, why, political economy - feasibility
    - ▪ Political economy
    - ▪ Socio-cultural
    - ▪ Gender
    - ▪ Other governance assessments on-going or conducted
  - o Resource mobilization
    - ▪ Budgeting
    - ▪ Timeline
    - ▪ Human resources
  - o Choosing an approach/method (Consider moving in one direction or other) (reference or matrix existing approaches – strength and weaknesses? Practical considerations)
    - ▪ Approach: participatory or not/other? At what stage is participation needed? Gender considerations. Effective involvement of forest-dependent communities. Who leads?
    - ▪ Using existing or new methodology
    - ▪ Method: define data collection and interpretation
    - ▪ Techniques and tools needed

- Implementation
  - o Design of method
    - ▪ Identifying data needs (qualitative and quantitative – need for combination of both)
    - ▪ Indicator design
      - • Different type indicators (input, process, output, outcome)
      - • Quality of indicators (SMART) – how to get to it?
      - • Number of indicators -> Index of indicators
      - • Indicator for diagnostics and monitoring
      - • Reference to existing indicators
      - • Consistency or robustness of set relative to objective
      - • Means of verification
    - ▪ Data collection
      - • Mapping sources/data types
      - • Data collection team
        - o Composition

- o   Capacity
  - o   Do's and don'ts
- Using the data
  - o   Interpretation
  - o   Publication
  - o   Moving to action
- Self-evaluation
  - o   Local, regional or national level? By participatory or third party or government body?
- Feed-back mechanism

Annex 3: Possible Templates for Reporting on Tools and Experiences

Forest Governance Data Collection
Template for key characteristics of data collection methods

Level 1 - the tool: To be completed by the authors of the tool (to present the key characteristics of the tool as designed).

Basic identifiers

1. Short name "the … tool"

2. One-sentence description "this is a tool for…"

3. Institutional owner of the tool (name, country, contact email, website *of the tool*)

4. Other organisations (a) involved in developing it; (b) involved in using it; (c) in early stages of involvement; (d) testing it

5. Countries where tool (a) has been used *including date and links to any reports*; (b) is planned to be used

Purpose

6. Anticipated impact of the tool "this tool was developed in order to" (all of these that apply):
   (a) *provide information to …* (institution/s); *for …* (what purpose)
   (b) *make something change …*
   (c) *strengthen* (key target group/s)
   (d) *other*

Expected Results

7. Immediate outcomes of the tool "the tool produced data on…" give a few bullet points

8. (Innovative) aspects of the presentation of the results

9. Did the tool assess *change* over time?

Planned Approach

10. How would you describe the intended approach (a few lines on each that apply)
    (a) *how participatory?*
    (b) *how empowering?*
    (c) *how involved were state organisations?*
    (d) *if repeated, how frequently?*
    (e) *other*

11. What other tools is this tool similar to, but how is it distinct?

Methodology

12. Briefly describe the key steps in bullet points (including clear information on the operational instruments to be used in the mentioned methodology)

13. Provide annotated links to key methodology publications

14. What are the (a) strengths; (b) weaknesses; (c) opportunities; and (d) risks of using this tool?

Sustainability
15. What potential is there regarding continued use of the tool – including repeat assessments and in new locations:
    (a) by the founding institution/s
    (b) by others
    (c) by integrating the tool into other (international) processes
    (d) other

16. Estimated/expected cost of using this tool? What factors should be considered in estimating the cost of implementing this tool? What aspects can be considered to reduce costs without undermining the effectiveness of the tool?

Forest Governance Data Collection
Template for key characteristics of data collection methods

Level 2 - experiences of using the tool: To be completed by the implementers of the tool (to capture the richness of different experiences for example in different countries)

Basic identifiers
1. The tool this experience adopted / adapted (*the short name used at Level 1*)

2. Institutional owner of the experience (name, country, contact email, website *of the report*)

3. Other organisations involved in using it;

4. Country(ies) where tool has been used *and date*

Impact
5. Did it achieve the desired objective? Give details in a few lines.

Outputs
6. Immediate outcomes of the tool "the tool produced data on…" give a few bullet points

7. (Innovative) aspects of the presentation of the results

8. Did the tool assess *change* over time?

Approach
9. How would you describe the approach (a few lines on each that apply)
   (a) *how participatory?*
   (b) *how empowering?*
   (c) *how involved were state organisations?*
   (d) *other*

10. How is the use of this tool in your particular circumstances distinct from the original tool, or other applications of this tool?

Methodology
11. Briefly describe the key steps in bullet points

12. Provide annotated links to key methodology publications

13. With hindsight, what are the (a) strengths; (b) weaknesses; (c) opportunities; and (d) risks of using this tool?

14. What potential is there regarding continued use of the tool – including repeat assessments and in new locations:
    (a) by you
    (b) by others
    (c) by integrating the tool into other (international) processes
    (d) other

15. How much effort did use of the tool require?
    (a) how much did your assessment cost?
    (b) how long did it take, (i) in researching and adapting the tool, and (ii) in applying it?
    (c) how many people were involved in conducting the assessment?
    (d) (if not already mentioned) what geographical area did it cover?
    (e) (if not already mentioned) how many respondents did it cover?

B. Adapted from agportal.org:

Illustrative Table of Descriptors

Name: Name of the study/indicator

Producer: The individual or organization that produced the data source

Stated purpose: The purpose for which the information source was intended

Funding source: The organization(s) that are funding or have funded the project

Users: Who is using the data

Current usage: Where, how and for what purpose the data is being used by different users

Where to find it: The web address where the database is located

Type of data used: Description of the type of data, i.e., expert assessments, household surveys, stories from news agencies, administrative data, etc.

Geographic coverage: Number of provinces or municipalities

Time coverage: The years when the first and most recent data were collected and the frequency with which data is collected

Contact details: The address at which the producer can be contacted

Methodology: Explains how the data was collected and compiled, and includes relevant information such as sources of data, data-gathering techniques, questionnaire design and coding

Pro-poor and gender sensitive: Explains if the indicators can be disaggregated by gender or income; capture directly or indirectly issues, perceptions and/or experiences of the poor and women; or if they have been chosen by the poor or women

Valid use: Explains how the sources should be used

Invalid use: Explains how the sources should not be used

Assumptions Describes the assumptions that were made by the producers while developing sources

Example of results: Provides an example of the information provided by the indicator

C. Adopted from Tropenbos report

1. Name of project

2. Initiation of project

3. Initiator

4. Partners

5. Geographic scope

6. Objective

7. Key elements and activities

8. Target groups

9. Characteristic elements

10. Focus areas

11. Present status

12. Planned activities

13. Website

14. Other literature sources.

15. Last date of update of this information

Annex 4: Core-group members (Primary representative and alternate)-TBF

	Institution/Country	Representative 1	Representative 2
1	FAO	Ewald Rametsteiner	Bob Simpson
2	PROFOR-World Bank	Nalin Kishor	Tuukka Castren
3	EFI	Jo van Brusselyn	
4	UNREDD	Emelyne Cheney	
5	UNDP/OGC	Tina Hageberg	Joachim Nahem
6	WRI	Crystal Davis	
7	FERN	Saskia Ozinga	
8	Brazil	to be identified	
9	Honduras	Filippo del Gatto (international forestry expert)	
10	Indonesia	to be identified	
11	Russia	to be identified	
12	Uganda	Steve Nsita (international forestry expert)	
13	Vietnam/RECOFTC	Nguyen Quang Tan	
14	West/Central Africa	Samuel Nguiffo	Silas Siakor