Strengthening Effective Forest Governance Monitoring Practice

An approach for integrating forest governance
into national forest-related monitoring systems

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Strengthening Effective Forest Governance Monitoring Practice

An approach for integrating forest governance into national forest-related monitoring systems

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBO	Community-based organization
CDI/WUR	Center for Development Innovation of Wageningen University
COFO	Committee on Forests of the FAO
CoP	Conference of Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FG	Forest Governance
FGM	Forest Governance Monitoring
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FRA	Forest resource assessment of the FAO
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ILUA	Integrated Land Use Assessment
IMF	International Monetary Fund
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MSP	Multistakeholder process
NCA	Natural Capital Advisers
NFMA	National Forest Monitoring Assessment
NFP	National forest programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PGA	Participatory Governance Assessment
PROFOR	Programme on Forests (hosted at the World Bank)
REDD/REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation; *REDD+* also includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.
RSIC	Remote Sensing Information Clearinghouse
SEM	Socio-Economic Monitoring
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
TBI	Tropenbos International
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-REDD	United Nations Program to support REDD+ Development
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreements (under the FLEGT Action Plan of the European Union)

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1. Introduction

Forest governance is increasingly seen as a key building block for sustainable forest management (SFM). The term "forest governance" applies to policy and planning, implementation, monitoring and improvement, including the related legislative and institutional arrangements (see **figure 1**). Due to the growing recognition of the importance of forest governance in progress towards SFM and the reduction of deforestation and forest degradation (including in the context of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, i.e. REDD+), a growing number of efforts are being taken to monitor and report the performance of forest governance. In order to be relevant, Forest Governance Monitoring (FGM) at a country level needs to first of all connect to national monitoring needs, but must also fulfil reporting requirements in relation to international conventions and agreements.

Within this context, REDD+ is a driving force for improving FGM. The concept of REDD+ is still developing, but during the 2010 Conference of Parties (CoP) of the UNFCCC safeguards on REDD+ were accepted. These safeguards are linked to forest governance aspects. But the development, design, operationalization, and institutionalization of FGM needs to be country-driven and respond to specific country conditions, priorities, requirements, and opportunities.

It also needs to build on existing in-country forest-related monitoring data, systems, and routines. So in terms of operations, it must be feasible, cost-effective, reliable (verifiable), and allow for reliable measurements of change over time.

It is important to mention the difference between monitoring on the one hand and evaluation/assessment at the other hand. While evaluation/assessment is a one-off activity, monitoring is a continuous process with regular data processing, analysis, and interpretation. For monitoring there are systems, routines, and procedures to collect and analyze the necessary data. The intention of this guide is by way of building on existing systems, routines, and procedures to compile existing information on forest governance. Gradually new elements can be introduced to the FGM regime. In this guide there will be much emphasis on local-level data collection.

The target groups of this guide are those that have set up and run forest-related monitoring systems, and have the power to amend these, adding or strengthening FGM components. This includes primarily governments, in particular officials and staff of the forest-related ministries/agencies at the national, regional and local levels. Beneficiaries are civil society organisations (CSOs), private sector, community organizations, particularly those at local level. Secondary beneficiaries could include parliamentarians, media and general public.

This guide aims to achieve the following:
- Empirically verifying FGM at the local level through embedding/connecting it with National Forest Monitoring Assessment (NFMA) field data collection.

- A better understanding and recognition of the country stakeholders concerning the relevance, urgency and value added of FGM for the various stakeholders and the forest sector as a whole.
- A better understanding of the key features of FGM and the steps and institutional arrangements to be established and resources needed for the design, operationalization, and institutionalization of effective FGM in the national monitoring systems.
- Increased motivation, active engagement, and commitment of key stakeholders to embark on a joint process to develop and strengthen the FGM system.
- Increased political will and resource allocation for FGM.

The set-up of this guide is as follows:
- Chapter 2: the rationale, principles and key success factors for FGM, from a country perspective.
- Chapter 3: the key design features of FGM.
- Chapter 4: the key steps in strengthening FGM

2. Rationale, principles and key success factors for forest governance monitoring from a country level perspective

2.1 WHAT IS FOREST GOVERNANCE?

> **Table 1: A changing view on the elements of forest governance**
> "It is now broadly understood that good governance in the forest sector is vital for achieving sustainable forest management. Furthermore, realizing the full potential of forests to contribute to reducing poverty can only be achieved if the forest sector is governed in such a way that it ensures poor people's access to and benefits from forest resources. However, forest governance means different things to different people and there is no internationally agreed definition. Originally, the term was understood as being almost synonymous with government or the way the government was ruling. With the changing vision of the role and responsibilities of governments, a broader vision of governance has evolved, which takes into consideration the new roles of civil society and the private sector. It involves multiple actors and multiple levels (local, national and international) and acknowledges that different stakeholders have different views, values and interests. Improving forest governance to move forward towards sustainable forest management therefore is a complex endeavor involving the active participation of a range of stakeholders, not just forestry administrations." (FAO COFO/2010/6.2)

'Forest governance' is a generic term for describing the way in which people and organizations rule and regulate forests. This relates to how they allocate and secure access to, rights over, and benefits from forests, including the planning, monitoring, and control of their use, management, and conservation. Important aspects include:

1. A coherent set of laws and regulations, both within the forest sector and in other sectors that influence forest management;
2. The coherent implementation of these laws;
3. The decision making processes regarding rules, laws and regulations
4. Clear mandates of, and arrangements between, different stakeholders (various units and levels of the government, NGO, community organisations business sector, etc.), and
5. Staff capable of executing the tasks that have been assigned to them.

The term 'Forest Governance' emerged in response to a changing vision of the roles and responsibilities of the government vis-à-vis other stakeholders: from an 'old' style of governance – where the government is steering – to a new conceptual understanding in which several actors are co-steering. In the latter vision, the government does not bear sole responsibility for governance, but every actor has a role with specific responsibilities. Important aspects of this new situation are its multi-actor, multi-level (local, national, and international), and multi-sector nature, recognizing that different stakeholders may embrace different values, interests, and worldviews. The term 'Forest Governance' is to a large extent non-normative in that the concept does not describe or refer to any particular 'type' of governance system (see also the COFO description of forest governance in **table 1**), but in general there is broad agreement on what forest governance relates to[1]. **Table 2** provides an

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[1] For an extensive discussion on forest governance, good governance and good enough governance see Van Bodegom, A.J., D. Klaver, F van Schoubroeck and O. van der Valk, 2008. FLEGT beyond T: exploring the meaning of 'Governance'concepts for the FLEGT process. Wageningen UR, The Netherlands http://www.cdi.wur.nl/UK/resources/Publications/

example from Zambia on the importance to develop a common understanding on forest governance from the outset among the stakeholders.

In contrast, the term '**Good Forest Governance'** is normative and is about quality. Important principles often mentioned in relation to 'Good Governance' include: participation (stakeholder engagement), fairness, accountability, transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness[2]. They are meant to be universally applicable, as they are based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Nonetheless, the interpretation of these principles is value-laden. Different stakeholders may have different perspectives, interests, and interpretations of what good forest governance means to them and how it should be operationalized. It is also possible that stakeholders may agree that a certain concrete issue is part of forest governance, but they may disagree about how, in principle the issue should be implemented.

A joint initiative between UNREDD/Chatham House and the World Bank formulated together with international experts developed indicators for (Good) Forest Governance[3][4], grouped into three pillars:
1. Policy, legal, institutional and regulatory frameworks,
2. Decision-making processes ; and
3. Implementation, enforcement and compliance.

Following this guidance document the three pillars and six principles can be taken as a starting point for discussions on what (good) forest governance in a country could mean.

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[2] ODI, 2006. Governance, development and aid effectiveness: a quick guide to complex relationships. Briefing paper March 2006. 4pp.

[3] FAO and PROFOR, 2011. Framework for assessing and monitoring forest governance monitoring. Rome, 34 pp. http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/i2227e/i2227e00.pdf

[4] Maidell, M., Emelyne Cheney & Ewald Rametsteiner. 2012. A common framework to assess and monitor forest governance. www.etfrn.org/etfrn/newsletter/news53/index.html
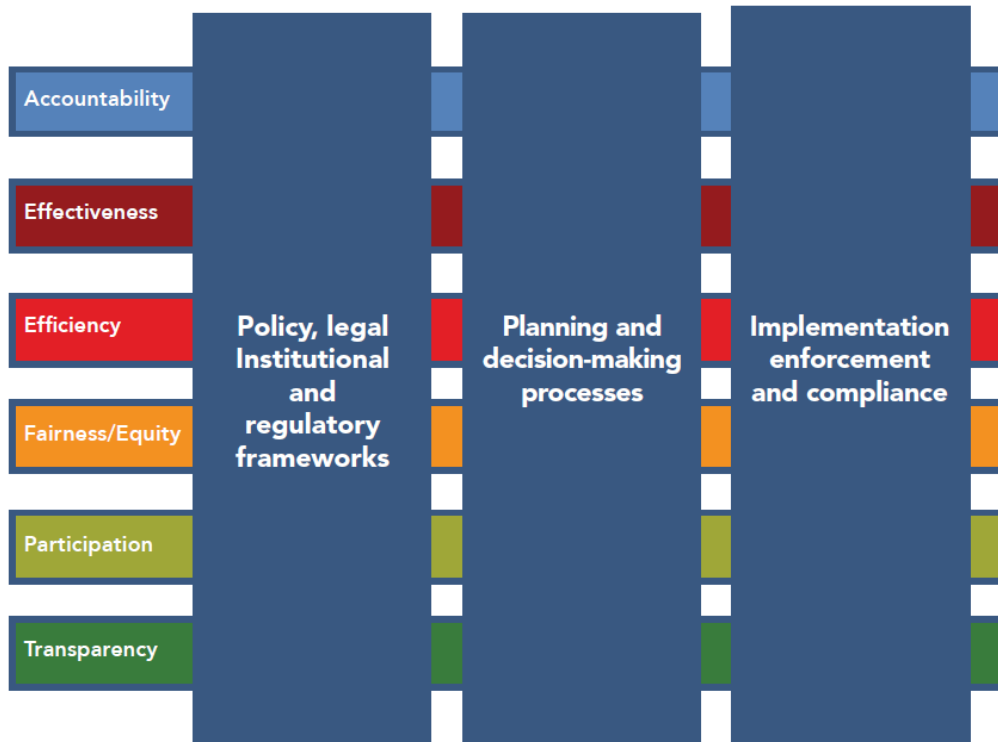
Figure 1: Pillars and Principles of Forest Governance

Table 2: What is forest governance: experiences from Zambia

During interviews in the Zambian pilot it became clear that most stakeholders were not very familiar with the concept of 'forest governance', much less what regimes exist for monitoring forest governance in the country. However, the aspects contained in the pillars/principles diagram (see figure 1) provided a useful framework for stakeholders to discuss forest governance. Indeed, most recognized many of the principles and pillars, even if they do not normally link them all together in the context of 'governance'. Thus the framework served to help develop a common language for how monitoring could reveal the status of forest governance in Zambia.

Once interviewees understood the context of FGM, the discussions were generally frank and positive. People were much more animated when talking about what they wanted from FGM rather than about the FGM that actually exists. Therefore, to focus attention on existing FGM, a productive approach may be to have the stakeholders focus on noting existing monitoring and evaluation regimes as part of building a database of possible FGM-indicators. Such a structured discussion is likely to be more productive as an open-ended discussion about what they want FGM to cover, as this can lead to unrealistic expectations, given the resources available.

2.2   WHY ENHANCE FOREST GOVERNANCE?

Before asking the question: why *monitor* forest governance, we need to ask: why enhance forest governance in the first place? We may approach this question from two angles: a) assessing the costs of bad governance, and b) assessing the benefits of good governance.

Inadequate forest governance has often contributed to the following interrelated costs[5]:

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[5] See: World Bank, 2009. Roots for Good Forest Outcomes: An Analytical Framework for Governance reform. Report No. 49572-GLB. 47 pp.

- Environmental impacts resulting in deforestation, forest degradation, biodiversity loss, and the loss of environmental services such as clean water and carbon sequestration;
- Economic impacts caused by poor governance and corruption, which distort forest economies. This may lead to unfair competition between legal and illegal forest practices and it may lead to a loss of revenue for the state and other stakeholders. Areas with poor governance pose risks that discourage investors (because of a lack of trust). Also, the forest sector may get a bad reputation, which affects the investment climate.
- Poverty and social impacts caused by poor governance harm forest-dependent communities. Livelihoods of indigenous people and the rural poor may be threatened through unclear and insecure land tenure and other property rights, lack of adherence to rule of law, and excessive discretionary authority.

In most countries the situation in and around forests is rapidly changing and has become increasingly dynamic and complex. An increasing number of – often competing – claims and uses are exerted on the country's forests by a growing range of actors, each with their specific needs, interests, and powers. So there is a need to tackle this complex situation.

The promotion of forest governance can bring about many **benefits** or fruits. Good forest governance makes it possible to optimize the production of goods and services from the forest (see **figure 2**).
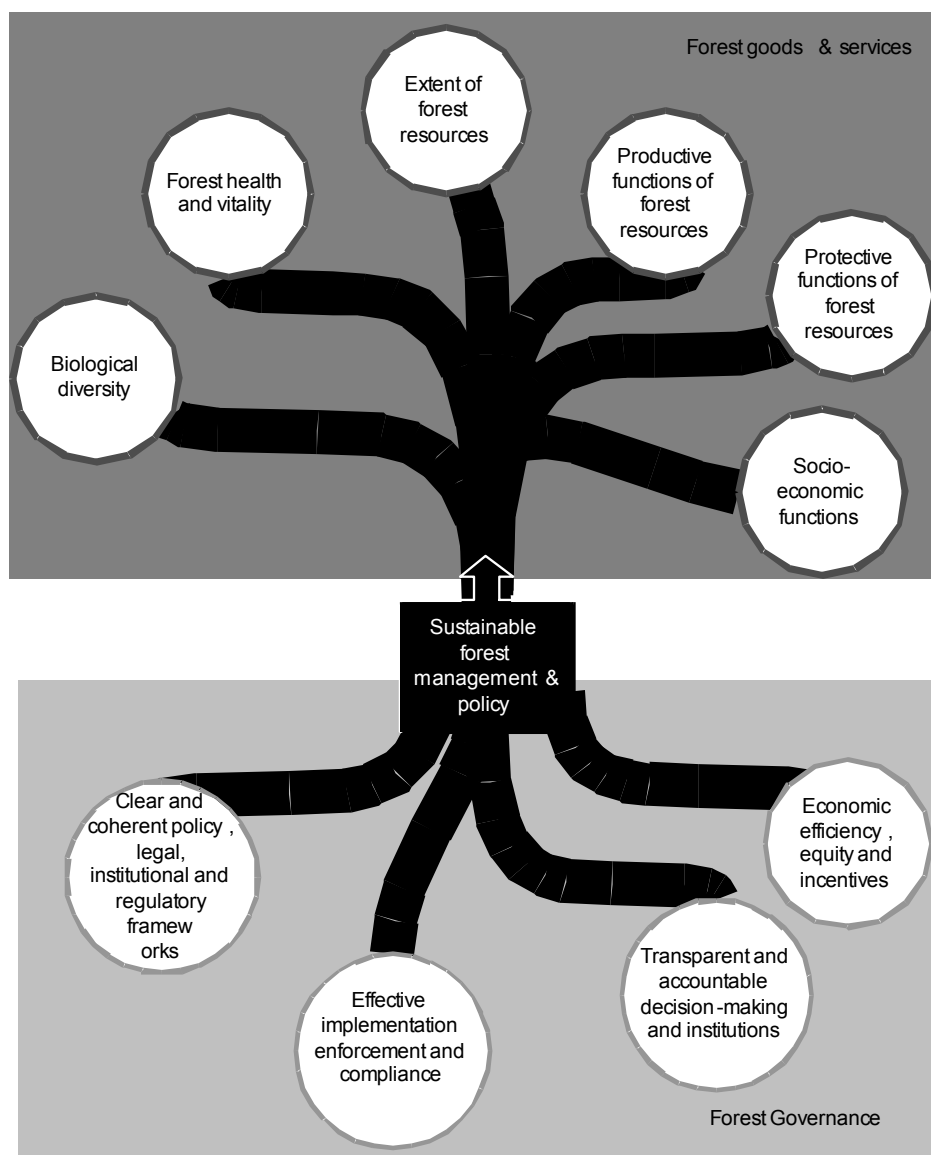
Figure 2: The roots and fruits of forest governance[6]

Important fruits borne through good forest governance may increase the benefits provided from forests to people in more efficient ways, enhancing livelihoods. It may include decreased degradation and a more productive resource, hence a more reliable asset base for creating income and revenues. It might also help to facilitate further investments into forestry, including the re-investment of revenues from forestry activities, and opening up of new opportunities created by internationally driven processes. These may generate additional forest revenues through increased (or at least sustained) access to international timber markets (in the case of 'legal-procurement regulations', including FLEGT, the US Lacey Act, and Australia's forthcoming legality-assurance legislation) or international payments for forest carbon capture, storage, and avoided emissions (in the case of REDD+). Such results can only be realized and ensured in the longer term if an adequate forest governance system is

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[6] Adapted from: World Bank, 2009. Roots for Good Forest Outcomes: An Analytical Framework for Governance reform. Report No. 49572-GLB. 47 pp.

in place. Indeed, in the case of REDD+, in 2010 these requirements were formulated into 'safeguards' (see **table 3**), which can be considered governance aspects.

Table 3: Safeguards for REDD+

When undertaking REDD+ activities, the following safeguards should be promoted and supported (Source: Annex I from draft decision -/CP.16, Long Term Cooperative Action (LCA), Cancun 2010):

(a) "Actions complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements;

(b) Transparent and effective national forest governance structures, taking into account national legislation and sovereignty;

(c) Respect for the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and members of local communities, by taking into account relevant international obligations, national circumstances and laws, and noting that the United Nations General Assembly has adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

(d) The full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular, indigenous peoples and local communities, in actions referred to in paragraphs 70 and 72 of this decision;

(e) Actions are consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that actions referred to in paragraph 70 of this decision are not used for the conversion of natural forests, but are instead used to incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests and their ecosystem services, and to enhance other social and environmental benefits;

(f) Actions to address the risks of reversals;

(g) Actions to reduce displacement of emissions."

2.3   WHY MONITOR FOREST GOVERNANCE?

Table 4: The Power of Measuring Results
- If you do not measure results, you cannot tell success from failure
- If you cannot see success, you cannot reward it
- If you cannot reward success, you are probably rewarding failure
- If you cannot see success, you cannot learn from it
- If you cannot recognize failure, you cannot correct it
- If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support

(Source: Kusek & Rist, 2004[7])

Promoting forest governance may be good, but why should one engage in monitoring such governance? Would it not be better to spend funds in a more useful way, for example on the actual improvement of governance directly? To these questions several answers are possible, which are basically an elaboration of **table 4**:

- *Monitoring improves performance of the forest sector:*
  - *Strategic management:* monitoring helps to make sure policies are on track by providing up-to-date information on the actual impacts of policies and institutional practices. Thus, monitoring supports accountability for these impacts. Through direct feedback, monitoring can help to improve the performance of stakeholders and the relations between them. Monitoring is fundamental to 'adaptive management', i.e. to make changes that respond to new demands/priorities, address new weaknesses as they are identified, and build on new strengths.

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[7] Kusek, J., and Rist, R., 2004, 'Ten Steps to a Results-based Monitoring and Evaluation System', World Bank, Washington, D.C. 268 pp. http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/23/27/35281194.pdf

o ***Operational management/implementation:*** Monitoring helps to improve operations. It provides information needed for co-ordinating human, financial, and physical resources committed to different programmes and projects across and within organizations and sectors, collaboration and performance in the forest sector, and for targeting particular geographic and/or programmatic areas to enhance effectiveness of investments. In this way monitoring can contribute to improving understanding between stakeholder groups.

- ***Monitoring improves reputation and credibility with the general public, investors, and the international community:*** Monitoring provides a basis for demonstrating to taxpayers, beneficiaries, and partners that expenditure, actions, and results are as agreed. This transparency helps to build legitimacy, or the 'social license to operate', which in turn reduces investment risks, thus improving the investment climate. For international processes (e.g. REDD+ and FLEGT) monitoring of forest governance is a tool for creating evidence that forest governance is indeed improving. The rationale here for REDD+ is that (a) better forest governance is needed to effectively decrease deforestation (see figure 2 on 'roots and fruits'); (b) reduction of deforestation cannot be pursued at all social costs, hence certain safeguards are needed (see **table 3**). In REDD+ governance monitoring is therefore a requirement (see **table 5**).

- ***Monitoring improves visibility to other departments within government and other economic sectors:*** A governance monitoring system helps to build trust between stakeholders in the sector and improve the image of the sector to the outside world. It can also demonstrate that the forest sector is important because it contributes to the sustainable development of the country. Ideally, effective FGM reinforces the actions of responsible corporate actors. Likewise, national FGM can fill the gaps left by field-level monitoring such as independent certification schemes for legally and sustainably produced forest products.

Table 5: REDD+ and forest monitoring
Paragraph 71 from draft decision -/CP.16, LCA, Cancun 2010:

71. Requests developing country Parties aiming to undertake activities ...., in the context of the provision of adequate and predictable support, including financial resources and technical and technological support to developing country Parties, in accordance with national circumstances and respective capabilities, to develop the following elements:

(a) A national strategy or action plan;

(b) A national forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level or, if appropriate, as an interim measure, subnational forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels, in accordance with national circumstances, and with provisions contained in decision 4/CP.15, and with any further elaboration of those provisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties;

(c) A robust and transparent national forest monitoring system for the monitoring and reporting of the activities referred to in paragraph 70 above, with, if appropriate, subnational monitoring and reporting as an interim measure, in accordance with national circumstances, and with the provisions contained in decision 4/CP.15, and with any further elaboration of those provisions agreed by the Conference of the Parties;

(d) A system for providing information on how the safeguards referred to in annex I to this decision are being addressed and respected throughout the implementation of the activities referred to in paragraph 70, while respecting sovereignty.

2.4 PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE FOREST GOVERNANCE MONITORING

The principles of forest governance (see **figure 1**) are: transparency, accountability, effectiveness, participation, fairness and efficiency. These principles are also applicable to FGM. Below we list the six principles and examples of their effective application in FGM[8]. **Table 7** summarizes some key success factors for improving and sustaining FGM.

1. **Transparency**:
   a. *Transparency about data.* Ensuring that up-to-date, accurate and complete data are publicly available is crucial to oversight and accountability. Transparency is also key to building trust among stakeholders.
   b. *Relevant and accessible information*: Information should be presented in a readily comprehensible manner for the different stakeholders. It should retain the detail and disaggregation necessary for analysis and evaluation.
   c. *Timely and accurate information:* Information should be made available in sufficient time and detail to permit analysis and engagement by relevant stakeholders. This means that information needs to be provided while planning as well as during and after the implementation of policies and programmes.
   d. *Communication and transparency*. In order to secure coordination within the forest agency and across sectors, it is important to clearly communicate the process of strengthening FGM to stakeholders from the start so that they understand what it involves. By disseminating the results of monitoring in a transparent way it helps users build a demand for the FGM service. If the results from monitoring are not used, then even the best designed system will—and indeed *should*—die from neglect.
2. **Accountability**:
   a. *Credibility of the monitoring process* and data quality is key. Monitoring is only of use if the data quality is accurate and adequate. There needs to be a mechanism for quality control and quality assurance of the data that is collected and reported and allows for continually adapting data collection and analysis methods.
   b. *Iterative learning, incremental improvement, and adaptive management*.
   Just like in the "national forest programme" (NFP) processes, the monitoring system is meant to provide a basis for learning that allows for sharing realities experienced along the way, and for using the lessons learned for fine-tuning and adapting the process. The monitoring system is meant to be a self-help tool for the government and other stakeholders in a country to improve accountability, to promote sectoral learning and adaptive management, and to promote better strategic and operational management and capacity building in the sector. Adjustment in forest governance is essentially an institutional change management process, i.e., a process of gradual improvements within a given time frame.
   c. *Capacity building at all levels*. Capacity will be needed, and may need to be built, for all stakeholders engaged in the design and implementation of FGM systems.

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[8] Partially based on the national forest programme principles and on Saunders, J. & R. Reeve. 2010 *Monitoring Governance for Implementation of REDD+*. Chatham House

To engender ownership, trust and accountability, these efforts to monitor forest governance should be developed in partnership with local institutions, respecting national circumstances.

3. **Effectiveness**: the monitoring should fit within goals set by the country. Aspects include:

    a. ***Country leadership and national ownership***. A national driven process that ensures ownership, and a firm commitment with a strong political and societal will are essential to manage forests sustainably and to monitor forest governance.

    b. ***Consistency with national policies, strategies*** and the country's National Forest Programme. Integration with the country's sustainable development strategies, inter-sectoral approaches, consistency with the country's legal frameworks, recognition and respect for customary and traditional rights and secure land tenure arrangements.

4. **Participation:** partnerships and inclusive, meaningful multi-actor participation are key for success, as are the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, decentralisation and empowerment, coordination and conflict-resolution.

    a. The monitoring system should be developed and implemented jointly by major stakeholders and take into consideration various relevant geographic and administrative levels in the country, also recognizing the differences in influence, means, roles, and mandates of the different stakeholders.

    b. ***Multi-stakeholder participation*** in the identification of indicators, as well as in the design and implementation of the tools and institutional arrangements for monitoring, reporting, and verification will result in more credible and useful information and more accountable institutions. It will also help to build trust between stakeholders and break down barriers between historically antagonistic parties.

5. **Fairness**: implies the degree to which rules apply equally to everyone in society. It is also about who takes part in the process and who is left out.

    a. ***Meaningful participation of disadvantaged stakeholders in the country***: remote and resource-dependent communities, unorganized actors, and women may lack the possibilities and opportunities (due to power and recognition, and a lack of time and funds) to effectively participate in the FGM process.

    b. ***Meaningful participation of groups that at first sight do not see the importance of forest monitoring for them.*** The private sector may not be interested in participating because they do not see any use in it. However such stakeholders do matter and it is critical that they are encouraged and enabled to participate effectively in and benefit from the process.

6. **Efficiency**:

    a. ***Building on existing data sets, data collection routines, Information Technology (IT) infrastructure and organisational frameworks*** as much as possible. Building on existing monitoring, including data collection/reporting commitments (e.g. under the FLEGT VPA impact monitoring, NFMA, FRA reporting and domestic collection of social statistics), and institutions will increase transparency and reliability of data while at the same time as reducing costs.

    b. ***Don't do it all at once, but prioritize and incentivize progress***.

       - ***Prioritize.*** By paying attention to all aspects of FG (*e.g.,* noted in Figure 1), the data collection and monitoring grid may become unmanageable, due to

expense and limited capacities for data collection and analysis; moreover it may take away the motivation of those engaged, as the dimensions of the tasks are beyond their capacities and means. This demands the need for prioritizing. A key issue for success is the extent to which key stakeholders can agree on what is "good enough"[9], within the circumstances, with a strategy, including credible targets, for building capacity and monitoring reach, moving forward over time.

- *Use, as much as possible, existing data*. An example is data collected and used in administrative or budgetary/expenditure monitoring that exist in countries. These data are often part of governance monitoring systems already in place.

c. *Consistency and complementarity in national and international systems*. Data needs at domestic levels ideally are compatible with international reporting requirements, e.g. on REDD+ safeguards.

d. *Sustainability and the cost of governance monitoring*. The forest monitoring system must be feasible, implementable, and cost effective. It must be compatible with the country's longer-term institutional and organizational capacities and resources for forest-related monitoring. If the process of gathering, assessing, and reporting of information is too costly there is a high risk that the system will collapse. In particular, this risk may occur in the case of external financing once donors have gone or funding cycles ended. Responsibilities and tasks within the monitoring system must be agreed and properly institutionalized among the different stakeholders to ensure continuity of the system and delivery of results.

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[9] 'Good Enough' is related here to Good Enough Governance, a concept that brings the discussion of 'good governance' from the realms of idealism - and sometimes the imposition of values - back to on-the-ground realities: what can be done from 'here and now'. An analysis should be made of the existing situation and what constitutes a set of common objectives and *priorities* identified and agreed by national stakeholders, because it will not be possible to achieve everything at once and in a way that different stakeholders would ideally want it to be. We need to emphasize that the "here and now" mentioned above is dynamic. 'Good enough' today should not be considered good enough 10 years from now. There needs to be a discussion on how to incentivize progress in a sensible sequence, including credible targets and accountability mechanisms to ensure that they are met, because 'good enough' is *never* an excuse for not pushing forward. See also:
Grindle, M.S., 2004. Good Enough Governance: poverty reduction and reform in developing countries. Governance: an institutional journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions, Vol. 17, No. 4, October 2004 (p. 525-548), and: Grindle, M.S. 2005. Good enough governance revisited. A report for DFID with reference to the Governance Target Strategy Paper, 2001. Harvard University, USA. 27 pp.

> **Table 6: Key success factors for improving and sustaining FGM**
>
> **Established demand and a sense of urgency**. Major stakeholders, in particular the government and parliament, in the country need to be convinced of the urgency, relevance, and value added of developing and/or improving monitoring or forest governance.
>
> **Ownership, commitment, and championship**. From the outset, the major national stakeholders in the forest sector should express co-responsibility and active support for the process, which requires that they are able to participate in guiding and benefiting from the process. This is particularly important in the case where funding of the process may initially come from international donors. National ownership and commitment is crucial in order to avoid the risk and impression that the FGM is becoming a donor driven action rather than a process designed to meet nationally identified needs. Existence of national champions to advance FGM is indispensable, both in state agencies and other stakeholders in the sector. Champions are persons who constantly and energetically promote the cause of FGM.
>
> **Credibility of leadership.** The organisation that leads the process must be considered as open, trustworthy, and effective to guide and facilitate the process of monitoring. Stakeholders are likely to forgive gaps or errors in data as long as they believe that the organisations that are in charge of the FGM are doing the utmost to give a fair picture of the situation, while striving for improvement and allowing outside oversight.

2.5   RELATION BETWEEN FOREST MONITORING AND FGM

The introduction of FGM in a country may raise confusion: what is the difference between existing practices of monitoring forests vs. monitoring forest governance? How can one explain to other people what FGM is and why it is important to introduce or extend it in the country?

While it will be important to use definitions that fit the country context, they could include:

- **Forest Monitoring** in the narrow sense focuses on the collection and analysis of data on technical, physical, and biological aspects of the forests. Forest monitoring in a wider sense includes bio-physical, socio-economic and forest governance aspects of forests, their management and use – i.e. it covers forests, *people and institutions*.
- **Forest Governance Monitoring** focuses on the systematic collection of data about the way in which people and organizations rule and regulate forests and their use, i.e., how they decide and plan responsibilities and actions on forests and forest management/use, and how they implement and enforce these.

In both cases the collection of data is a *neutral* activity, assessment and evaluation are not part of forest monitoring or forest governance monitoring.[10]

The term 'Forest Monitoring' is sometimes understood as the inventory of biophysical aspects of forests "only". In practice many existing forest monitoring activities seem to fit into this restricted definition of Forest Monitoring. A good example of this practice is Zambia, where historically, forest monitoring has been associated with the inventory of biophysical aspects of forests (See **table 7**).

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[10] The difference between forest monitoring and FGM depends mainly on the understanding of the scope of "forest monitoring". If the scope of "forest monitoring" is the full range of the "7 Thematic Elements of SFM" agreed by countries in the UN General Assembly in the context of the "Non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests" in 2007, "forest governance monitoring" is a specific sub-component of "forest monitoring". Forest monitoring would then be comprised of biophysical monitoring, socio-economic monitoring, and governance monitoring.

The ultimate objective of Forest Monitoring (in the restricted sense) is to collect and analyze data for strategic and operational management. More specifically its objectives are to collect and analyze data about developments, trends on e.g., extent and nature of the forest resource (including species, ecosystems, quality, biological diversity), products and services of forests, and forest's contribution to GDP.

In contrast, FGM has two main focal areas:

- Collection and analysis of data on budget allocations, expenditures, revenues, oversight, administrative planning and reporting procedures, law enforcement and judicial system actions. The results of this monitoring are not necessarily open to the public and often aiming at strengthening efficiency and effectiveness of government agencies. It gives special attention to the division of mandates at (a) different institutions at the same level, (b) between the different levels, and (c) between government and non-government institutions. It deals with questions like: how are policies and strategies transferred into annual plans, implemented at the different levels and reported (planning, budget, achievement of targets)? In FGM data are collected about legislation, regulations, and their enforcement as well as mechanisms for conflict resolution.

- Collection and analysis of data on various specific aspects related to the conduct of government agencies on the implementation of work that is of interest to the public, or for national/international reporting (e.g. FLEGT VPA, REDD+). Reporting and external disclosure often aims at strengthening transparency and accountability, which help to improve and maintain a good reputation of the sector and which help to increase the visibility towards other sectors. When the focus of FGM is on external purposes, special attention is needed to collect data related to the question of how the six principles of forest governance (accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, fairness/equity, participation and transparency) are applied in the three pillars as shown in **figure 1**.

However, the difference between FM (in the restricted sense) and FGM is not always clear cut. Existing forest monitoring often incorporates aspects of FGM, although often not mentioned as such. Issues mentioned under FGM have strong links with existing FM activities. For instance, declining forest resources might be a consequence of inadequate forest governance arrangements (including tenure and use rights, and their enforcement, financing arrangements). In **table 8** for some examples from Vietnam are given to illustrate the vague boundaries between FM and FGM. The aim of FGM is not to work in competition with existing Forest Monitoring, but to complement it by addressing different aspects of forest management. The categorization of such monitoring (under the label of FM or FGM) is only of secondary importance.

Table 8: Forest Monitoring or Forest Governance Monitoring: examples from Vietnam

In this table two examples are given to illustrate the occasional difficulty to clearly distinguish the differences between FM and FGM: (a) FM aspects that can also be categorized as FGM, and (b) issues brought up in a FGM workshop, which could also be categorized as FM.

(a) In Vietnam, every 5 years a progress report on the Vietnam Forestry Development Strategy is presented. In the report an assessment is made of the achievement of the overall Strategy objective, which is definitively FGM. The report also contains information about 72 indicators for the forest sector. Some of these indicators are relevant for FGM, for example:
- Number of Forest Protection and Development Law violation cases.
- Number of people working in forest science and technology.
- Number of government staff working in the forestry sector that are re-trained.
- Number of village communities participating in forest management.

(b) During the inventory of FGM issues in Vietnam the monitoring of the three types of forests using maps and in the 'field' came up as an important FGM issue. The three types of forests are 'special-use forest', 'protection forest' and 'production forest'. Planning of the three types is only done at the master plan level, setting certain targets for the surface of each type, and not clearly marked on maps and not demarcated in the field. At first glance this could be considered a purely 'traditional' Forest Monitoring issue: where are the forest resources located? But it is clear that this issue has far-reaching consequences for land tenure and the relation with other economic sectors, which also have claims on land. The Vietnamese government has a target (defined in a law) to plant new forests, but this mapping issue very much complicates the question: where to do it?

3. Design features of functional FGM

In developing a functional FGM that fits the country needs and priorities, there are a number of issues to be considered in any country, irrespective of their specific conditions.

This chapter deals with the question: what does the final picture of a functioning FGM system – ideally - look like? It provides a general outline of design features that are relevant to all countries. However, the way in which countries will set their specific priorities and make choices regarding what will be monitored, in what way and by whom, may vary depending on national circumstances, needs, and ambitions.

In this chapter the basic aspects of FGM development and design are described:
1. ***Design objective, scope, focus, and capabilities***
2. ***Design process*** - **the main stages**
3. ***Design building blocks***

3.1 DESIGNING A FGM SYSTEM

FGM is **defined** here as a continuous process of collecting and analysing information to compare how well the forest governance system is performing against the stated principles, goals, objectives, and expected results (outcomes) stated in relevant policies, strategies, and/or programmes. Data collected provides a basis for reporting, improvements, management, and resource allocation.

The governance system has elements like the different levels where government institutions and services are functioning, but also vital elements such as the country's sustainable development strategies, inter-sectoral approaches, legal frameworks, recognition and respect for customary and traditional rights and land tenure arrangements. Monitoring is different from evaluation, because it is a continuous process, with regular reporting.

The **objective** of FGM is the provision and analysis of actualized and reliable information for assessing and tracking performance and progress of the forest governance system over time as a basis for informed decision making and incremental improvement at the various levels of the governance system.

The **scope** of the FGM is the national forest governance information needs, as well as international forest governance reporting requirements and commitments.

The **focus** of FGM will have to look at forest governance from two angles (see **figure 2**):
1. The root elements that shape forest governance practice; and,
2. The fruits that are envisaged to be the result of forest governance.

If in a country there is a good participatory process on forest policy formulation and implementation, but the result is that forests are disappearing in an uncontrolled way and revenue objectives unmet, then the forest/revenue losses may be an indicator that the country lacks 'good forest governance' in aspects other than participation. So both angles will need to

be monitored in order to maintain a comprehensive understanding about forest governance and its effects. Fortunately regarding the fruits of forest management, 'traditional' forest monitoring systems are generally already focused on collecting data on such indicators. The challenge is to combine and complement these with the 'root' elements: the forest governance aspects.

Features & capabilities: Functional FGM will need to be able to:
1. Build on **existing data** sets and collection routines, which reduces costs and builds on existing acceptance and routines;
2. Handle the **multi-actor, multi-level, multi-meaning** character of forest governance, which means the degree in which the complex character of forest governance is taken into account;
3. With a defined **periodicity,** collect data and publish reports;
4. Involve affected **stakeholders**;
5. Support **accountability** of political actors and the private sector to society, which also requires effective national and international conflict resolution mechanisms;
6. Provide **transparency, clarity, and openness** about information and related decision making processes; it needs to be clear what data will be disclosed and what (detailed) data will not be disclosed but only published at an aggregated level; external review and verification assists credibility and acts as a buffer;
7. Be **efficient** in terms of using resources, time, and energy; efficiency also means **sustainable**. Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting incorporated efficiently into existing institutional frameworks, not requiring continual outside financing or technical assistance.
8. Be **effective**, which means that it provides useful insights in relation to defined information needs of stakeholders of FGM;
9. Empowering in the sense that it **strengthens capacities** of all stakeholders involved in FGM to play their respective roles;
10. Connected to relevant **international** forest-related policies, processes, and systems.

3.2 DESIGN PROCESS

In the development and design process of FGM three main - overlapping - stages can be distinguished: i) preparing for design, ii) the actual design process, and iii) sustaining the designed FGM. Within these stages there are eight building blocks that must be addressed in developing a functioning FGM:

Stage I: Preparing for design
1. Creating a forest governance **reference framework** – establishing a shared understanding among parties involved of what is involved in forest governance and its monitoring.
2. Agreeing on a **defined purpose & vision** – establishing a shared understanding of the key reasons for engaging in FGM.

Stage II: Actual design process

3. Making **information needs** explicit – establishing a shared understanding of what information is needed to assess forest governance performance, taking into consideration the need to prioritize amongst the many information needs;

4. Selecting **methods & methodologies** for data collection – establishing a shared understanding of the ways in which the needed information will be gathered from which sources of information; use of primary and secondary data; clarification of the role of IT in the methodologies of collection, storage, retrieval etc.;

5. Creating an outline of the **organisation (flow) & intended use of information** – establishing clear processes for turning data into information and the way in which it will flow and be accessed by intended audiences;

Stage III: Sustaining design

6. Agreeing on **roles & responsibilities** – establishing shared understanding of who will be expected to do what to make FGM happen;

7. Activating a plan for putting in place operational **capacities & conditions** for FGM – establishing a shared understanding of what will be required in terms of capacities and conditions to sustain efforts.

8. Providing an **institutional embedding** – establishing FGM in existing organisational and institutional arrangements.

Figure 3 presents a generic overview of the main building blocks and steps in the development and design of forest governance monitoring and how these relate to each other.
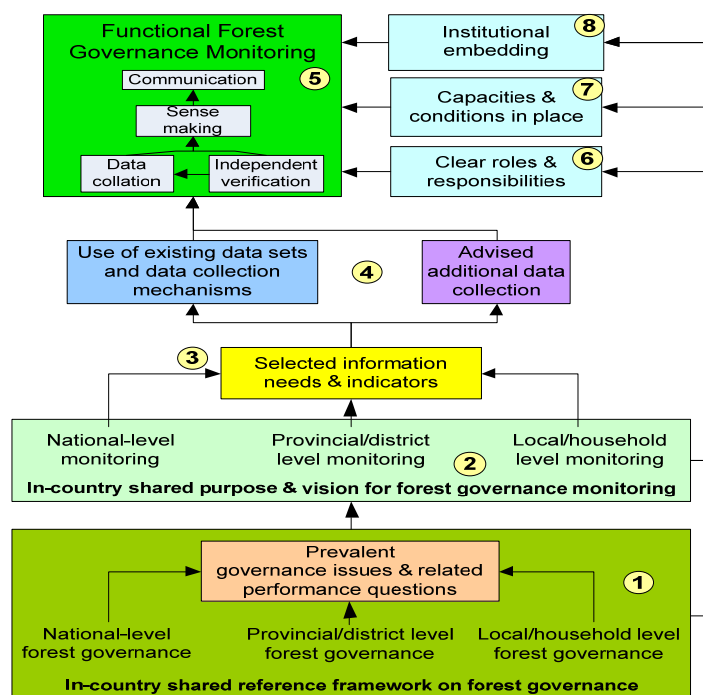
Figure 3: A framework for FGM design

In the following section the main building blocks will be discussed in more detail. Chapter 4 describes the process of how to make it happen.

3.3 MAIN BUILDING BLOCKS

3.3.1 A forest governance reference framework

For a design process to be effective there must be a shared understanding among the key parties of what forest governance is about, what relevant issues are at play in the country (at the national, regional, and local levels), and what would be key (performance) questions for FGM. Inventory of and consensus on these issues can serve as the common reference framework. Figure 1 (the 3 pillars and 6 principles of Forest Governance) of chapter 2 can serve as a starting point for developing such a reference framework.

Framework components:
1. Defining forest governance
   - The most important reference is the country's key policies and respective legislation, etc, which prescribe how FG should be set up and work (as opposed to how it works in practice).
   - The Pillar & Principles framework (see section 1.1, 1.2 and **figure 1**) can be used as the generic starting point for defining forest governance and its most important aspects. It also helps to identify priority issues that need more or better FGM.
2. A shared vision on forest governance: what is the desired situation as to forest governance? This could imply defining shared ambitions for forest governance at different levels:
   - Household/local level
   - Provincial/district level
   - Country level

   There are several reasons to distinguish between various levels, i.e.:
   - The capacity of government institutions is unevenly distributed across scales and sectors.
   - Citizens' needs also vary at the local level, and differ from the national level.
   - Under decentralization, monitoring capacity and implementation must occur at the appropriate (e.g., provincial) level that policies/decisions are made.
3. Fruits of forest governance (forest goods and services, see **figure 2**): it may be important to describe the most important goods and services the forest has to provide. Roots and fruits are connected. For example, if the forest policy and implementation leads to a situation in which the forest (and its goods and services) gradually disappear, it is important considering the implications for the design of the monitoring system. Existing monitoring systems for forests generally provide at least part of the data needed here (e.g., extent of the forest estate, volume of products).
4. Taking into consideration points 1-3, key issues for forest governance at different levels should be defined (see **table 9** for some examples).

Table 9: Examples of governance issues

- ➢ Inconsistent policies/legal frameworks
- ➢ Insufficient enforcement capacities
- ➢ Lack of data, information, knowledge
- ➢ Existence of corruption and bribes
- ➢ Market and price distortion
- ➢ Deficient investment climate for the forestry sector

3.3.2 A clearly identified purpose for monitoring

The next important set of questions to be answered is:
- Why embark on FGM?
- Why is it necessary to measure aspects of forest governance on a periodic basis?

These are key questions that need to be answered convincingly in order to motivate those engaged in the implementation of FGM. Section 1.3 already discussed a number of reasons for engaging in FGM. These reasons will have to be made country specific, so other reasons may be added.

A shared understanding of the different purposes for FGM for the different stakeholders in a particular country will help in finding agreement on anticipated and desired outputs and outcomes. It will also help in agreeing on priorities for FGM and the final selection of what will and will not become part of the FGM regime initially, as well as setting targets for expanding the regime over time.

The shared understanding on the purpose and scope of FGM needs to be consistent with national policies, strategies/NFP documents, and fit within the country's sustainable development strategies and inter-sectoral approaches. It would be consistent with the country's legal frameworks, with recognition and respect for customary and traditional rights and secure land tenure arrangements.

3.3.3 Required capacities & conditions

To support functional FGM some capacities and conditions need to be in place. These relate to both enabling good performance in general, and to sustaining good practice.

Four main categories of capacities and conditions can be distinguished:
1. *Human and institutional capacity.* This relates to knowledge, expertise, but also conflict management/mitigation capabilities and process facilitation.
2. *Motivation and related incentives.* Incentives are understood here in the broadest sense of the word. Essentially they relate to motivation for playing the needed role in FGM for all stakeholders.
3. *Organisational resources.* Infrastructure, organizational arrangements, and collaboration to allow for the performance of FGM activities.
4. *Financial resources.* Funding resources to work on the above capacities and conditions.

In **table 10** some examples of capacities and conditions for well-functioning FGM are mentioned.

3.3.4 Institutional embedding

Effective design and subsequent implementation of FGM requires clear institutional roles, mandates and responsibilities linked to existing institutions and actors. From the start this is a key issue, as well as when dividing roles and responsibilities.

In order to create an enabling environment for institutional embedding, financing arrangements should foster ownership, independence and accountability. Establishing consistent financing through an institution capable of fostering national ownership, independence, and accountability will be necessary to ensure that monitoring provides relevant and reliable information through inclusive locally-appropriate methodologies[11].

Table 10: Capacities and conditions for FGM

Example capacities
- Individual competencies for FGM: energies, skills, knowledge, expertise and abilities of individuals. This includes leadership and managerial competencies, as well as technical competencies (such as in relation to statistical data analysis methodologies).
- Collective ability of a group, agency, organization to shape and implement FGM. Such ability relates to technical, logistical, managerial or generative (e.g. ability to earn legitimacy, to adapt, to create meaning, etc.) skills.
- Capacity relates to the overall ability of parties involved in FGM to create value for aspired forest governance.

(Adapted from Baser & Morgan, 2008.)

Example incentives
- Providing appropriate training for task performance;
- Providing sufficient support and equipment for task performance;
- Providing appropriate systems and logistical arrangement for information management;
- Providing adequate financial compensation for task performance;
- Acknowledgement of value of task performance;
- Success is acknowledged and rewarded;

Example organisational structures
- Link different levels and responsibilities in government (internal coordination);
- Establish formal organizational lines of authority (that are clear) for collecting, analyzing, and reporting of performance information;

Example financial arrangements
- Contracts for consultants / external expertise: fees and travel expense;
- Physical non-contractual investment costs: equipment, computers and software, publication materials, etc.
- Training and other forms of capacity building;
- Labour costs: recurrent: permanent staff salaries; temporary: support staff, technical assistance (e.g. for sampling)

Non-labour operational costs: e.g. stationary, meetings, allowances for primary stakeholders and project implementers, special monitoring events, external data such as maps and surveys.

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[11] Saunders. J. & R. Reeve. 2010 *Monitoring Governance for Implementation of REDD+*. Chatham House

4. A first outline for a process for strengthening a country's FGM

Chapter 3 outlined the generic core elements for developing and sustaining functional FGM. The challenge for countries that want to embark upon the endeavour of strengthening FGM is how to get the process moving, taking into account the country's specific conditions, needs, and ambitions. This chapter presents some practical guidance on the steps to take for each of the different stages. It is largely based on the experiences to date in the Zambia and Vietnam pilots, in particular the steps and actions for the first stage of the FGM process: "Preparing for Design" that we have completed in these pilots[12].

4.1   INTRODUCTION

If the objective is to develop a country-led approach for strengthening FGM in a manner that meets government and stakeholders' demands, a pragmatic approach to strengthening a country's FGM could consist of the following major phases, see **figure 4**:
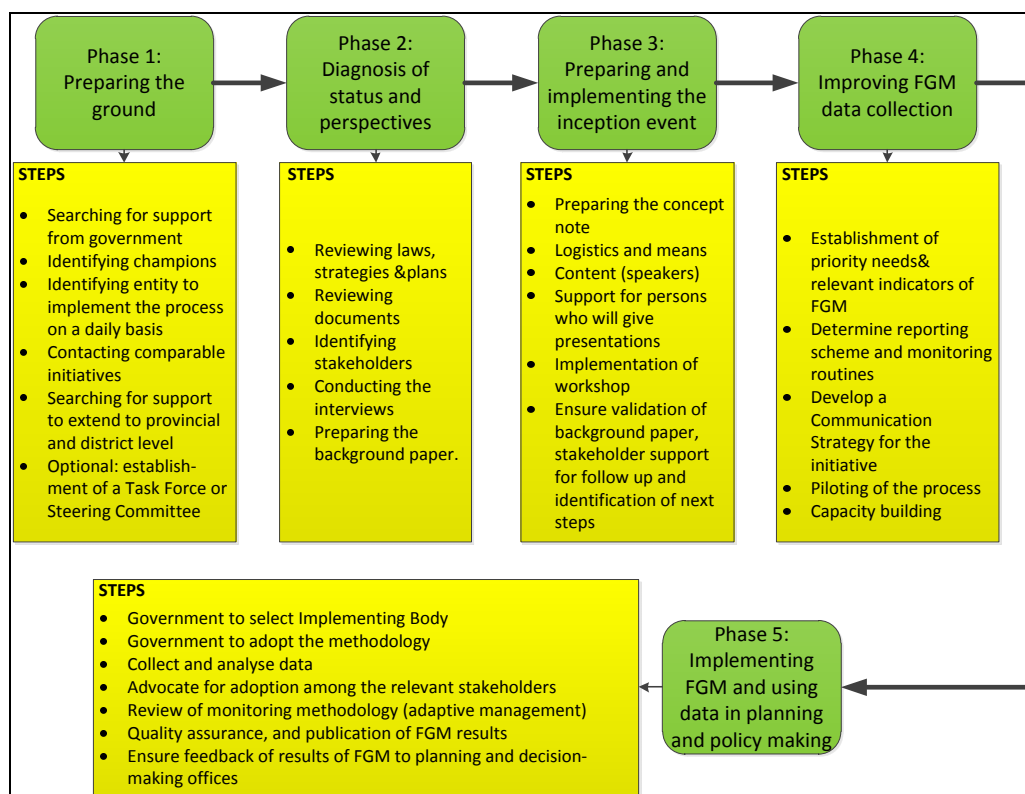
Figure 4: Phases and steps in strengthening FGM

Roles: In order to embed FGM within existing frameworks, the design of the initiative must reflect the institutional/governance framework within the country, and should involve the engagement of high-level champions and consultation with key stakeholders. This can be best achieved through four major roles:

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[12] A compilation of experiences of strengthening a FGM in Vietnam and Zambia up to 2012 is presented in: Arend Jan van Bodegom, Herman Savenije, Art Blundell, Martin Sekeleti, Le Khac Coi & Ewald Rametsteiner. 2012. Strengthening forest governance monitoring: Zambia and Vietnam. www.etfrn.org/etfrn/newsletter/news53/index.html

1. An **Initiator** that decides to pursue strengthening FGM, thus, acting as the primary champion of the initiative (*e.g.,* the Forestry Department).
2. A **Facilitator** who will assess the institutional and legal landscape with respect to existing mechanisms and attitudes toward forest governance and monitoring;
3. A **Workshop Organizer** who will be in charge of organising the inception event (phase 4)
4. A **Multi-Stakeholder Process** (MSP) to identify priorities, build partnerships and demand for FGM, and to propose follow up activities.

4.2 OVERVIEW OF MAIN PHASES IN STRENGTHENING FGM

The following is an overview of each phase, the objectives contained within, and the actors responsible.

4.2.1 Phase 1: Preparing the ground

The objective of this phase is to establish country ownership, identify the initiative's primary goals, clarify decision-making roles, and responsibilities.
Steps of this phase include:
   a. Searching for support from the government
   b. Identifying champions that will be the political lead in advocating for enhanced FGM.
   c. Identifying the entity (person or team) to implement the process on a daily basis.
   d. Contacting initiatives with comparable purposes like FLEGT, REDD+, as well as national platforms for forest-related activities.
   e. Searching for a supporting organization(s) to extend the activities to provincial and local levels.
   f. Establishing a Task Force and/or Steering Committee.

   a. Search for support from the government

In the initial phase of exploring the importance and interest in strengthening FGM it is perhaps not that clear who is leading and who has the energy for promoting the initiative. Establishing this leadership is a gradual process. Presumably there will already be a leader within the government – as it is country-driven – but it is important to ensure strong buy-in from as broad a leadership as possible. In many cases, some help and suggestions from outside towards the government may be useful to push the process.

Table 11: Gradual growing support from the Vietnamese and Zambian Governments
In Vietnam, authorities recognized the importance of the concept of FGM. Being a relatively new concept, it is difficult to fully grasp all the operational steps and implications of strengthening FGM. VN-Forest, the department in charge of forest policies, gradually took over the initiative and pushed strongly for the organisation of the inception workshop and follow-up work.
Similarly in Zambia, there has been growing support for FGM from the Forestry Department as the lead agency and from other actors. Following a successful inception workshop on FGM and other meetings with the national consultant, the Forestry Department, apart from pushing for the inclusion of FGM related variables in the ILUA II data collection process, has also expressed interest in collecting FGM related information in the Forestry Situation Analysis exercise, an internal evaluation process of the Forestry Department.

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b. Identify champions that will be the political lead in advocating for enhanced FGM

In many cases the forestry department will lead the process, but other agencies may also collect forest-relevant information. Therefore, it is important that other relevant departments are involved as lead agencies; it should not be a forest sectoral activity only. For example, other ministries may be in charge of land tenure issues, finance and planning, and thus they may always play an important role. Likewise, non-governmental organisations might be willing to collaborate and take on a leading role. In Zambia, the Zambia Environmental Management Agency, a statutory environmental law enforcement agency of the state, was already involved in the collection and publication of forest related governance data. Similarly, a number of NGOs were already involved in FGM data collection and expressed willingness to collaborate with the Forestry Department. In such cases, the role of the Forestry Department, in coordinating and promoting quality standards in collection of FGM information may be crucial in building and strengthening FGM in the country.

c. Identify the entity (person or team) to implement the process on a daily basis

For a good and fruitful process it is necessary to have one person or a small team that is responsible for the daily execution of the coordination of the initiative to strengthen FGM once it is started. This can be a person or small team of public servants within for example the forest department. Alternatively it can be someone from outside government, e.g. a national consultant, who may be contracted using national or international funds, depending on the situation. (See **annex 1** for a provisional Terms of Reference for such a consultant or group of persons. It is important that the consultant on the one hand has confidence from the national authorities, and on the other hand is prepared to start a process that may be new to him/her with unpredictable outcomes. According to the national circumstances and an assessment of local capacity, it may be necessary to contract other external assistance, such as requesting technical assistance from FAO through international consultants.

d. Contact initiatives with comparable purposes like FLEGT, REDD+, as well as national platforms for forest-related activities.

Governance of forests and its monitoring are upcoming issues, so in the country activities to strengthen FGM may already be going on. The idea of FGM is that it collects and analyses data important for the governance of forests, including such processes. So it is important to include these processes from the start. **Table 12 and 13** give an overview of the FGM relevant initiatives that are present in Zambia and Vietnam.

Table 12: FGM relevant initiatives in Zambia

In late-2010, Zambia's Forestry Department championed strengthening the country's FGM. This work is within the FAO-Finland supported ILUA programme, which is collecting data on forests and their uses from plots across Zambia (www.fao.org/forestry/17847/en/zmb/). Zambia also collected relevant data through its Fifth National Development Plan from 2006-2010. However, the lead agency, the Ministry of Finance and National Planning pointed out that the Environment and Natural Resources sector experience difficulties in information–flow, which undermines analyses of progress in support of decision making. Zambia's Sixth National Development Plan (2011-2015) recognizes the need to strengthen oversight for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of programmes and points out that measures, such as enforced multi-level performance audits, will be put in place to provide a clear and strong mechanism for tracking progress. The focus will be on improving coordination of M&E systems at national, provincial and district levels, and a Capacity Building Programme to enhance smooth implementation of M&E programmes.

> **Table 13: FGM relevant initiatives in Vietnam**
>
> As of late 2011, in Vietnam several other FGM-related development initiatives were going on:
>
> - For assisting in compliance with FLEGT and the Lacey Act, a Standing Office has been established with a Steering Committee and a technical Working Group. The USA and the EU are the two most important targets for export of Vietnamese timber products, so it is important for Vietnam to anticipate changing demands from these countries.
> - Also for REDD+, a Standing Office has been established, with a Steering Committee and a national REDD+ Network and four sub-technical working groups, one of which is about REDD Governance.
> - In addition, the UNDP supported the Participatory Governance Assessment (PGA) process that aims to analyze current governance structures to support effective REDD+ implementation; the PGA intends to contribute to the development of the national system for providing information on REDD+ safeguards, particularly focusing on benefit sharing and participation.
> - A fourth initiative is the Socio-Economic Monitoring (SEM) under the National Forestry Assessment. Around forest plots where biophysical data are collected, households are interviewed on their socio-economic situation. During these interviews, some questions about Forest Governance could be introduced. All these initiatives are new and a challenge will be their coordination.
> - At the national level, several monitoring efforts are being undertaken on procedures, results of implementation of administrative plans, spending of budgets and judicial procedures relevant for FGM. For example, recently the Vietnam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index 2010 was published, with indicators on transparency in the communal land use planning and control of corruption (e.g. bribes for land title).
> - One effort is the monitoring of the Vietnam Forestry Development Strategy 2006-2020 (VFDS). For the VFDS, a monitoring system is already in place; it contains 72 forest sector indicators, of which several are relevant for FGM. This monitoring effort is an initiative of the Vietnamese multi-stakeholder platform for the forestry sector: the Forest Sector Support Partnership. This partnership maintains a website (http://www.vietnamforestry.org.vn/) and also organizes the publication of relevant documents, but, although it has a secretarial office within the forestry department (VNForest), it is not an organizational entity.
>
> During the inception workshop, representatives of FLEGT and REDD+ (including PGA) gave presentations on their initiatives. In addition, the participants were invited by the PGA team to participate in their workshop where themes were discussed that also had been identified as priority areas for FGM.

e. Search for a supporting organization to extend the activities to provincial and local levels

Although the consultant or team established under (c) is in charge of the daily activities, it is difficult to give stakeholders from the local- and provincial-level an appropriate voice. It takes a great deal of effort and money to identify these stakeholders, to travel to them and conduct interviews with them. So this may easily come at the bottom of the list of consultation efforts. Therefore, it is recommended to involve an organisation with firm roots at the provincial and local level that can do part of the work.

f. Establish a Task Force or ad hoc Working Group

The purpose of the Task Force may be:
1. To act as champions and promote the initiative to strengthen FGM.
2. To catalyze and direct informed multi-stakeholder consultations in order to develop national priorities.
3. To see to that integrated FGM is readily adoptable and adaptable by the national Government and capable of fulfilling national needs as well as international reporting commitments.
4. Assist in directing the national consultant or entity, provide technical evaluation, develop the multi-stakeholder process (MSP), and inform policy decisions.

Where relevant, the Task Force should be integrated with existing committees or steering committees. The Task Force can help the government finalize the objectives of the FGM Strengthening Initiative, thus, establishing a common understanding for the project, including outlining roles and decision-making responsibilities. (See **annex 2** for a draft Terms of Reference)

4.2.2 Phase 2: Diagnosis of status and perspectives

This phase has the following steps:

a. The national consultant (or the team) conducts an initial assessment of the country's policy and legislative framework relevant to forest governance.
b. Review of other relevant literature.
c. Identify key stakeholders at local, provincial and national level to be interviewed.
d. Interview these stakeholders, which will provide a preliminary assessment of the key stakeholders' priorities/agendas/positions and, equally importantly, evaluate any monitoring that they are currently conducting.
e. The National Consultant prepares a background paper incorporating the results from the above activities.
f. The background paper is reviewed by qualified staff with knowledge about national Forest Governance issues.

a. Initial assessment of the country's policy and legislative framework

The aim of this inventory is to create a framework to which stakeholders can refer while making observations on forest governance and FGM. The relevant policy framework has to be summarised, including:

- Forest and key forest-related policies and strategies, including national forest programme documents.
- Forest laws and regulations, but also, laws in related fields such as land tenure and decision-making processes.
- Long-term and annual plans.

In this phase it is sufficient to very briefly summarize these policies, strategies, and laws. Later on, through document review and interviews, specific FGM-related issues will come up that can be attached to this legislative framework.

b. Conduct a document review on current forest governance-related monitoring systems

The aim of this review is to produce a short description of current monitoring systems for the forestry sector. At this stage, it is not necessary to go into much detail, this would be an activity for phase 5 during the initial design of a FGM system. For now, the National Consultant (or team) should assess the availability of country-specific documentation related to FGM, such as:

- National reporting & databases:
  - Forestry Department (e.g., national forest assessment information), but also government agencies relevant to forest governance, such as the Ministries of Finance, Justice, Planning, *etc.*

- o Census Bureaus and other statistical agencies
- o Law enforcement and the judiciary
- o Civil Society, such as the Human Rights, Intellectual Property and Development Trust (HURID) reports—The Access Initiative coalition reports, and other national NGOs
- Internationally-related reports, such as FAO (FRA)/World Bank/IMF/Transparency International's governance reports.

This document review should be brought and considered a continuous activity: during interviews with stakeholders, new information and unexpected documents may come up and these should be added to the list of relevant monitoring systems, see also **table 14**.

Table 14: Relevant information in Vietnam and Zambia from unexpected sources

In *Vietnam* at the national level several monitoring efforts are undertaken on procedures, results of implementation of administrative plans, spending of budgets, and judicial procedures relevant to FGM. For example, recently the Vietnam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index 2010 was published, with indicators on transparency in the communal land use planning and control of corruption (bribes for land title). The land tenure aspect dealt with here could also be an important indicator for FGM.

In *Zambia* the document review exercise under the ILUA project also revealed unexpected sources of FGM information. Among these sources was a publication entitled *'Forests –our heritage under threats'* which reports results of a Norwegian Church funded data collection exercise on the status of the country's forest sector in 7 districts. The publication, which is poised to be a bi-annual exercise, largely reports on forest governance issues such as the quality of forest related policies, the forest department's human resource capacity and law enforcement. Such publications demonstrate the value of conducting a document review exercise in order to identify existing FGM systems to build on.

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c. Identify key stakeholders at local, provincial, and national level to be interviewed

Having consulted with the government, the consultant will develop a list of stakeholder groups from government, civil society, and industry, and identify key individuals to approach within groups at different administrative levels (e.g. national, provincial, district). With respect to government, it is important to interview non-forestry agencies relevant to governance (*e.g.,* Ministries of Finance, Justice, Planning, *etc.*). In the Vietnam case, 13 persons at national and 14 persons at provincial/district level have been interviewed (see **table 15**). This proved to be a sufficient basis to prepare a background document with relevant information for strengthening FGM, which was then presented at the inception workshop.

Table 15: Persons interviewed in Vietnam and Zambia

In *Vietnam* the national consultant interviewed 13 persons at the national level. They worked in different offices at the forestry department, for a national NGO, for the Forest Product Association and for an international NGO. At the provincial and district levels, Tropenbos interviewed in total 14 persons. These included a Vice-Chairman of the Peoples Committee at district level and one at commune level, a director of a State Forest Company, a deputy director of the forestry department at provincial level, and a Vice-Director of the forest protection unit at district level.

In *Zambia*, the international consultant interviewed 19 individuals from the government, civil society, industry, and UN agencies to introduce the concept of embedding FGM within existing national monitoring processes. This effort was complemented by a further 17 interviews by the national consultant. All these interviews were conducted in the capital Lusaka. Future efforts will need to ensure adequate consultation at the local/provincial level. Fortunately the existence of ILUA should help facilitate this outreach.

Key stakeholders are those who are affected by strengthening FGM (i.e., users) or who can influence the strengthening of FGM and its implementation in a significant way (positively or negatively).

Representatives from industry and NGOs at regional and local level may have different perceptions in comparison with stakeholders at central level. It might be useful to include middle managers whose participation will be critical for the successful implementation of FGM and whose programmatic needs for governance information can be an important demand for data collection.

With respect to civil society, organizations to be interviewed could include:
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which bring people together in a common cause, such as environmental organizations, human rights organizations, charitable organizations, educational and training organizations, *etc.*;
- Community-based organizations (CBOs), especially those that represent forest-dependent communities (for example a local producers organization)
- Labor-market players (*i.e.,* trade unions and employers federations – the 'social partners');
- Organizations representing social and economic players, which are not social partners in the strict sense of the term (for instance, consumer organizations); and,
- Academics and research centers.

The interviews should primarily be focused on national organizations, but should include international organizations or initiatives that operate in the country.

d. Interview the stakeholders

There is a need to prioritize, perhaps according to the following criteria (not necessarily in order of importance):
- Those that will benefit (or lose) most from strengthening FGM (i.e., they have strong *motivation*)
- Those that have the biggest *influence* on the initiative's success (or failure)
- Those that are currently conducting FGM or using data produced from FGM
- Those that have the capacity to collect, analyze and use FGM data

In order to introduce the idea of FGM, **figure 1** with the pillars of FGM can be used, that is:
- Clear and coherent policy, legal, institutional and regulatory frameworks;
- Transparent and accountable decision-making and institutions; and,
- Effective implementation, enforcement and compliance.

This should also include the six principles and could be framed within the context of existing legislation. When stakeholders want to raise a certain issue, they will probably refer to existing policies and strategies, laws and plans, how these were made, and how they are implemented.

The National Consultant could prepare a short introduction to the project and hold one-on-one or small group *informational meetings* with these key players. The meetings could:
- **Inform the stakeholders of the project**, its objectives, principles and rationale, which should promote partnership building and, thus, encourage local ownership;

- **Collect relevant background information**, mapping priorities and interests, compiling a list of existing monitoring mechanisms (including roles/responsibilities of institutions/structures collecting and storing the information, and an assessment of their current capacity to monitor and evaluate the data) and other useful data sources, and identifying institutions that will be the primary users of the FGM and how they use or would like to use the forest governance data, especially those that need the monitoring results to make and implement more effective policy. This should include a consideration of the existing administrative and financial routines (including, for example, strategic/operational planning, auditing of budget and financial flows) as FGM should be embedded within these existing monitoring mechanisms;
- **Solicit views** regarding FGM, including issues that need further monitoring *inter alia*, how the system might fit with existing programmes, appropriate approaches for data collection, issues around data quality, and necessary conditions for success. This should include an evaluation of the relative importance of potential barriers to strengthening FGM (*e.g.,* a lack of fiscal resources, lack of political will/leadership, lack of government and public awareness/demand, lack of transparency, lack of coordination, lack of expertise and knowledge).

It will be important to keep comprehensive notes during the interviews in order to share with other members of the Task Force so they can help prepare the background report and inception workshop. Furthermore, additional actors are likely to become involved in the initiative, for example through Working Groups, and they will benefit from the background information provided by the briefing notes.

Through these interviews, the consultant/team can begin to identify in particular:
- Issues that should be monitored within a system for FGM.
- Suggestions for *existing* indicators that tell something about these issues and suggestions for *new* indicators in order to improve the 'picture' around the specific issue.
- During the interviews new champions may be identified that can help drive implementation of FGM.

For more suggestions, see **annex 3** for guidance on interviewing stakeholders

e. **Prepare the background document**

Based on the reviews (steps a-b) and the stakeholder interviews (step d), the National Consultant will then prepare a background paper incorporating the results from the above activities. This Background Paper is an important tool in preparation for a useful multi-stakeholder workshop (i.e., the inception workshop). Therefore, it should be ready prior the workshop, and it may be necessary to translate it into the local language. It should not be too long (maximum 40 pages), it should be focused so that it can be used as the basis for the discussion in the working groups of the workshops. The Paper should provide the background substance for the recommendations expected to come out of the inception workshop. See **annex 4** for guidance on the preparation of the Background Document.

FGM is a relatively new issue for many, and the skills and knowledge of the national consultant / team in this respect may be limited. In addition, FGM is an issue with political dimensions, so a cautious approach is recommended. Therefore it is suggested that the background paper be reviewed by qualified staff with knowledge about Forest Governance. Such resource persons may be recruited nationally or internationally, depending on the situation.

4.2.3   Phase 3: Preparing and implementing the inception event

The background document is only one input for the inception workshop. Several other vital aspects must be dealt with:
a. Design of the workshop
b. Logistics for the workshop, including technical assistance and financing for travel for provincial participants
c. Implementation of the workshop

a.   Preparation of a concept note

The purpose of a concept note is to set out the ideas on the preparation and organization of the Inception Workshop   Critical factors for a successful inception workshop can be found in **table 16**, and an example of the Concept Note in **annex 5**. The text of the concept note, modified for the country context, can then be used for the written invitation to the workshop.

Table 16: Critical factors for a successful inception workshop
- High-level political support voiced at the start and end of the workshop;   - The right stakeholders participate meaningfully;   - An atmosphere conducive to exchanging ideas, meeting one another, strengthening relationships, and building trust;   - Creative facilitation that helps to bring out relevant perspectives while mitigating potential conflict;   - Introduction of concepts and goals (with related material) in a way that produces realistic expectations of roles and outcomes   - Ensure that at the conclusion of the workshop there is an agreed plan for further action.

b.   Design of the workshop

The objective of the workshop is to contribute to strengthened outreach to stakeholders, a shared understanding on the current status of FGM in the country and how it can be enhanced, including the identification of follow-up steps, and a validation of stakeholder priorities. More specific **objectives**:
- Introduce the initiative and its rationale to a wide group of stakeholders;
- Discuss existing monitoring systems and identify key monitoring indicators;
- Identify priorities, clarify ingredients for success/feasibility;
- Identify a *Working Group* (*WG*) that will continue FGM-development; and,
- Outline roles and timelines

Key **outcomes** from the workshop include:
- The initiative is understood by key stakeholders, who support it and feel sufficiently involved, and share a common vision on the vital aspects of FGM.

- A first set of critical aspects of forest governance is identified and suggestions made on the way they can be monitored with *existing* means, procedures, and data.
- Determination of the way FGM can be embedded in existing monitoring efforts and how it will be further developed by interested ministries, agencies, and stakeholders. This includes an assessment of the opportunities for partnerships.
- A first set of priority themes to be monitored and preliminary suggestions about what *additional* data could be collected for their monitoring.
- A common understanding about what next steps will be taken and how stakeholders will be kept informed during the process.

The format for the workshop must be decided, perhaps:
- a 1 day workshop for a broad audience, see **annex 6** for a draft agenda, and **table 17** for a list of attendees from the Vietnam and Zambian pilots; this can be followed by
- a half-day workshop for those interested in thinking in more detail about the way forward, including possible members of a Working Group on FGM.
- Directly afterwards, the organizing unit, the government representatives, the national consultant/team (i.e. the Task Force) could hold a one-day retreat to finalize the outcomes of the workshop and identify the roles and responsibilities for the next steps, especially for the Working Group. This should include a communication strategy for informing attendees of the workshop about progress going forward.

Table 17: Speakers at the Vietnam and Zambia workshop
At the FGM inception workshop in Vietnam representatives of the following stakeholders gave their views on FGM:
- Private sector
- Provincial authorities
- Group FSC-certified small-plantation households
- District authorities
- REDD+ office in Vietnam
- FLEGT-VPA office

In the inception workshop in *Zambia* participants were from:
- government ministries (including representatives from provincial offices):
  - Natural Resources Environment and Tourism
  - Agriculture and Cooperatives
  - the Survey Department
  - Forestry Department
- academia,
- the private sector:
  - Forests and Forestry Industry Corporation
  - the Timber Producers' Association
- civil society:
  - the National Environmental Education Programme
  - Zambian Wildlife Association
  - the Wildlife and Environmental Conservation Society
  - Ornithological Society,
  - Climate Change Network, Transparency International – Zambia
- FAO.

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c. **Logistics**

It is necessary to determine who is in charge of the logistic and administrative organisation of the Inception Workshop and ensure they have sufficient resources to hold the event. The budget should be sufficient to ensure the participation of stakeholders from district and provincial levels. (For example, in the Vietnamese pilot, travel and accommodation had to be arranged for some 20 persons from the provinces and districts.) Likewise, it will be important for the inter/national consultants to provide technical assistance to those who will present at the workshop, especially those who represent the field- and district level.

d.   Implementation of the workshop

Table 18 presents some outcomes that resulted from the Vietnam and Zambia workshop as an example of what can be expected.

Table 18: Examples of outcomes of inception workshops

So far the following priority issues have been identified for FGM development in *Vietnam*:
- *Benefit sharing*. Especially for local communities; benefit sharing mechanisms and actual payment for environmental services according to the law.
- *Decision-making*. Both at the national and local levels, laws stipulate the process of formulating laws and plans within a consultative process. More rigorous monitoring frameworks and verification systems are necessary.
- *Land tenure*. This includes: informal land use and tenure, small-scale leases, illegal land conversion, land use rights of households, demarcation and clear boundaries of forest (and forest types) on maps and in the field.
- *Timber harvesting* from natural forests: monitoring of the quality of the harvesting plans and their implementation, damage during harvest, impact on local communities, and the chain of custody tracking of timber products.
- *Staff capacity*: performance and training of staff and other stakeholders.

In *Zambia* a clear outcome was that more than just forestry affects forests and that must be taken into account in the design of FGM.
- Many of the stakeholders in Zambia insisted that governance monitoring should be expanded beyond forestry. They felt that monitoring should include other natural resources (especially in a country where mining is important), as well as including other sectors that affect the forests, such as agriculture. Ensuring good governance in these sectors was also seen as critical to meeting Zambia's objectives for its forest resources.

4.2.4   Phase 4: Improving FGM data collection

Key objectives of this phase are to develop a draft plan for strengthening FGM, including identifying appropriate governance indicators and monitoring systems. These should be brought together in a plan of action.

Steps in this phase could comprise:
  a. Establishment of priority information needs & relevant indicators of FGM
  b. Identifying existing data (and data collection mechanisms)
  c. Determining information gaps and related data collection methods
  d. Linking new data and data collection routines to existing reporting schemes and monitoring routines
  e. Piloting of the process
  f. Capacity building
  g. Developing a communication strategy for the initiative

a. **Establishment of priority information needs & relevant indicators of FGM**

Information needs will be closely linked to the defined purpose(s) of the FGM and the priorities stated in key policy documents as well as by key stakeholders.

Governance related priority information needs that arise from key policies influencing forests concern information needed for policy makers to "govern" the implementation and subsequent further development of these policies, strategies and related planning documents. Documents to consider comprise forest policy or NFP documents, general development plans as well as energy, agriculture, climate change, biodiversity strategies of a country. It in particular also includes planning documents at national and sub-national levels (see **table 19** for an example from Zambia).

In many cases it will be valuable to undertake a separate and more systematic information needs enquiry by interviewing stakeholders at national and sub-national levels more specifically on their key information requirements, with a view to derive key questions, indicators and variables for data collection.

Table 19: FGM information needs assessment in Zambia

In Zambia, the examination of policy and planning documents was crucial to the identification of forest governance related priority information needs. The needs assessment exercise examined both national and sub-national documents (e.g district development plans). Besides forest policies and plans, the exercise included an examination of gender, land and biodiversity conservation policies and strategic documents. Document analysis was followed by interviews of stakeholders in the forest and related sectors on their key FGM information requirements. The results of the documents analysis and stakeholder interviews were then combined to generate a consolidated list of information needs from which FGM variables and indicators for data collection were derived.

For this step the following aspects are important:

- **Deriving information needs through performance questions.** Defining performance questions may be a helpful step in the process of defining key indicators linked to existing policies, strategies and planning documents as well as stakeholder interviews. Example performance questions, for example, related to enforcement of illegal logging policy:
  - Who are the key players in enforcing the policy?
  - How will we know whether the policy is being enforced?
  - What would indicate that the policy is not being enforced?
  - What conditions undermine enforcement of the policy?

  Such an overview of questions can point to the most relevant/telling question to be defined as an indicator.
- **Using the smallest possible indicator set to deliver necessary credible data.** It may be useful to verify an answer by using different sources of information (i.e. triangulation), and then refine the set of answers to the fewest indicators that are still able to deliver accurate, credible answers. It may be necessary to improve this list of indicators through field testing and iterative design. Monitoring key issues rigorously is preferred to

superficial monitoring of a very broad set of issues[13]. Criteria for prioritizing indicators may include:

     o Appropriateness of scale and level of detail for assessment
     o Ease of measurement and assessment, which is related to the cost of collection
     o Relevance to a range of situations
     o Usefulness for other purposes.

Defining appropriate proxy[14] indicators helps to reduce data collection requirements. However, these indicators may only point out the fact that something changed (or not) without giving clues to any causal relationship(s).

- **Suggested indicators.** To start with, it is useful to review existing policies, strategies, and plans for which indicators have already been defined. FAO and others, have defined the earlier mentioned Pillar and principles Framework. This framework contains for each of the pillars key criteria and these can be tailored to the situation and needs of the individual countries. See section 2.1 and FAO/PROFOR, 2012.
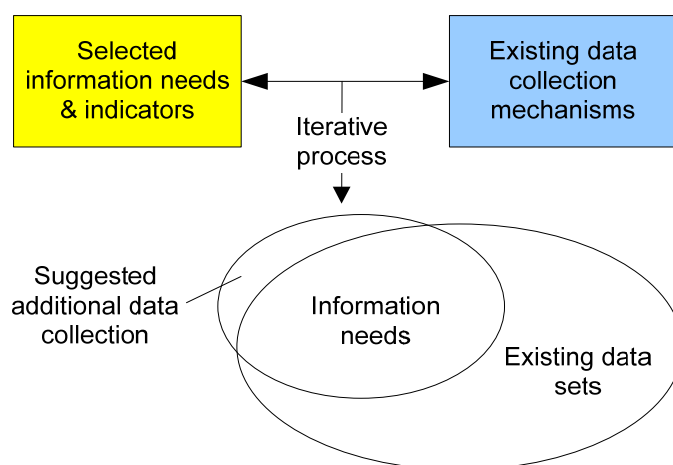

Figure 5: Selection of information needs

    b.   **Identifying existing data (and data collection mechanisms)**

- **Use of existing data sets**. Once priority information needs at different levels have been identified, this can be compared to existing (forest) monitoring mechanisms. Rather than devising new monitoring mechanisms, FGM is meant to make maximum use of existing mechanisms. See **figure 5**.
- **Types of existing data sets** to be tapped may include (see also **figure 6**):

- Household surveys	- Inventories
- Key informant interviews	- Filed complaints (police records,
- Transect data	forest guard records)
- GIS data	- Customs records
- Research studies	- Forestry office records on logging
- Field experiments	permits, user rights, etc.
- Questionnaires	- Market conditions (for wood)

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[13] Saunders & Reeve. 2010 *Monitoring Governance for Implementation of REDD+*. Chatham House
[14] Indirect measure or sign that approximates or represents a phenomenon in the absence of a direct measure or sign. For example, the number of tin sheets on roofs in a village may be a proxy indicator for the average level of income in that village.

<table>
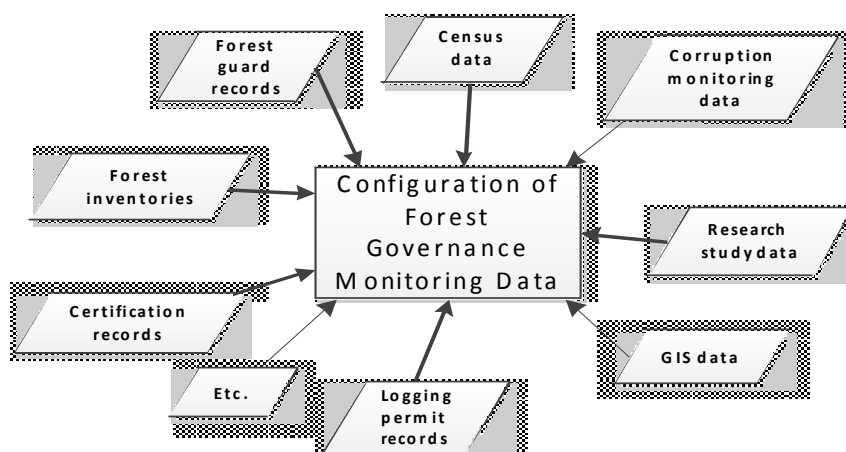<tr><td>- Certification records</td><td>- Forecasting forest futures (modelling)</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 6: Examples of relevant sources of data

- **Sources of existing data sets**. Examples of sources of existing data include:
  - *National and sub-national sources of data:*
    Monitoring systems: NFMA (National Forest Monitoring and Assessment), National Statistics Agencies, audits, judiciary/policing reporting, census data, forestry office records, illegal logging monitoring, National funds,
    One-off data collection: Parliamentary committees, academic research reports, Anti-corruption bureau reports, Forest certification programmes
  - *International sources of data[15]:*
    FAO, World Bank, IMF, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Transparency International;

c.   **Determining information gaps and related data collection methods**

Information gaps can be determined by systematically comparing the results of the information needs assessment with the results of the assessment of existing information and data. This reveals what type of information is missing in the existing FGM systems, i.e. what information would be needed to strengthen existing FGM systems (see **table 20**).

Table 20: Determining information gaps in Zambia
In Zambia, FGM information gaps were identified through systematically comparing the results of the needs assessment and existing data sets. A range of sources of existing data sets were identified. The sources included routine monitoring records for government annual reporting, NGO reports and publications reporting on Zambia's commitments to multi-lateral environmental agreements. By comparing the FGM information needs and the existing data sets, the process ensured that the information gaps identified represented information that was either missing or inadequately covered by existing data sets. From the information gaps, for each set of information needs, indicators and variables for possible inclusion in the FGM data collection process were derived.

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[15] Most of the data demanded by international bodies are provided by governments, hence they can be and need to be derived from national data.

- **Quality of data and the data collection process.** Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection will have quality standards regarding appropriate implementation that need to be observed. This may relate to e.g. statistical requirements (e.g. sampling techniques) and operational requirements (e.g. interviewing techniques). Triangulation of methods and sources of data used, strengthens scope, reliability and accuracy of findings. See **table 21.**

Table 21: Criteria for assessing the quality of methodological design.

Utility
The utility checklist helps to ensure that FGM will serve the information needs of intended users.

Accuracy
The accuracy checklist helps to ensure that FGM will reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine worth or merit of forest governance.

Feasibility
The feasibility checklist helps to ensure that FGM will be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and make the best use of existing resources and opportunities.

Propriety
The propriety checklist helps to ensure that FGM will be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the monitoring, as well as those affected by its results.

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d. **Linking new data and data collection routines to existing reporting schemes and monitoring routines**

An assessment should be made of the gaps in reporting mechanisms and capacities, based on a comparison of the database of existing reporting schemes and the priority needs of the stakeholders. To fill the gaps there may be opportunities to amend existing data collection routines, including those undertaken by forestry agencies and central statistical offices. Other options comprise partnerships between government and non-government reporting schemes, including international initiatives like REDD+ and FLEGT. Likewise, there may be opportunities to build FGM into other socio-economic monitoring schemes, such as, in Zambia the monitoring and evaluation of ILUA.
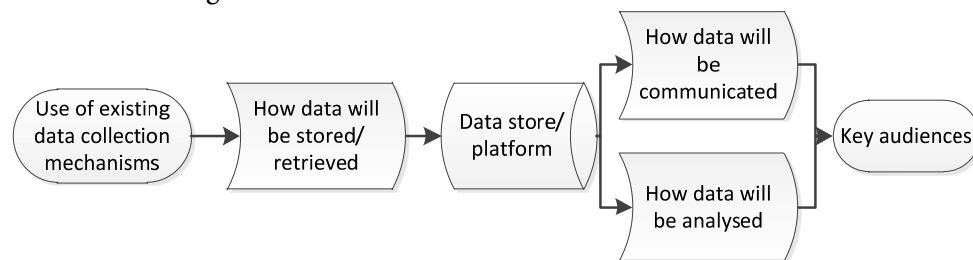

Figure 7: Planning for a good flow of data/information

- **Processing and storing information.** Before data/information becomes useful, it will need to be collected, processed, stored, retrieved, analysed, and communicated to the appropriate stakeholders. Though existing data collection mechanisms will provide for part of the data storage, further integration may be necessary for disseminating data. It recommended to develop a web-accessible database. An example from Zambia is the Vice-President's Disaster Preparedness Office that is currently coordinating stakeholders (in government, among donors and NGOs) to form a Remote Sensing Information Clearinghouse (RSIC). (As the name implies, the RSIC will compile a database of all the remote-sensed data being collected within Zambia.) The RSIC may provide a useful

model for compiling existing monitoring relevant to forestry into a single clearinghouse, perhaps curated by Zambia's Forestry Department.

e. Piloting of the process

It is recommended to pilot FGM in a limited number of provinces and based on this experience, extend the result to the whole country. Activities might include:
- Identification of FGM pilot provinces;
- Stakeholder workshops at provincial and district level in order to raise awareness about the importance of FG and its monitoring, and to get a better insight into what the local issues are and what are possible indicators can be monitored.
- Piloting and refinement of FGM methodologies for the pilot province and district, including new field data collection techniques.
- Piloting changes to the routines for data collection and monitoring

At the end of the pilot phase it could be useful to organize a national validation workshop. Its key objective would be: to validate, through a MSP with a focus on technical expertise, the proposed methodology to strengthen FGM through integration with existing mechanisms. The best way to reach this objective is to conduct a follow-up stakeholder validation workshop to review and validate the experiences obtained in the pilot areas.
- Assess the results and revise methodology as appropriate (and, if necessary, repeat field implementation).
- Finalize methodology. Make recommendations for the most appropriate methodology for strengthening FGM.

f. Develop a Communication Strategy for the initiative.

It will be important to build awareness about FGM in order to increase demand for the initiative. Likewise, it will be important to keep stakeholders aware of progress with FGM in order to maintain their connection/sense of ownership to the initiative.

For example, in Vietnam a*wareness raising of managers and leaders* at local levels was mentioned as an issue during the inception workshop. They are usually familiar with monitoring technical issues, but are hesitant to include non-technical issues.

g. Capacity building

Activities include the following:
- Identify gaps in existing mechanisms/institutions and requirements for capacity building.
- Define a programme for building the capacity of these institutions/mechanisms so that they can monitor the indicators in practice; firstly for the pilot provinces/districts, then across the country.

4.2.5 Phase 5: Implementing FGM and using data in planning and policy making

For the FGM to be effective is critical to ensure that the FGM methodology is adopted across the whole country, integrating data from existing systems and collecting additional data where appropriate and that the FGM data are used for planning and policy development.

In accomplishing these objectives the following activities may have to be considered:
- Government to select an institution responsible for implementing FGM (the *Implementing Body*).
- Government to adopt the methodology (after modification, if necessary).
- Collect and analyse data. Relevant stakeholders begin data collection, and the Implementing Body collates the data.
- Advocate for adoption among the relevant stakeholders. If appropriate conduct stakeholder validation workshops on a regular basis.
- Review of monitoring methodology. Based on these reviews, the Implementing Body practices adaptive management, revising the methodology as appropriate.
- After passing appropriate quality assurance, the Implementing Body makes the FGM results publicly available.
- Ensure feedback of results of Forest Governance Monitoring to ministries and offices in charge of planning and decision-making.

Key roles & responsibilities. For the further development, management and sustenance of FGM it is essential to be explicit about the required roles and responsibilities of the different parties involved. **Table 22** lists several examples how these roles and responsibilities can be taken up by the different parties.

Table 22: Key roles and responsibilities	
Roles	**Entity/stakeholder responsible**
Decides to pursue the policy of strengthening FGM within the country	The *Government Leader*, a ministry or unit within the government
➢ Steering of the FGM efforts (permanently or in the set- up phase) ➢ Helping champion the initiative, assist in directing the *national* and *international consultants*, ➢ Provide technical evaluation, develop the *multi-stakeholder process* (MSP), and inform policy decisions. ➢ Helping the Government Leader finalize the objectives of the *FGM Strengthening Initiative,* thus, establishing a common understanding for the project, including outlining roles and decision-making responsibilities.	Multi-stakeholder Task Force (TF) consisting of representatives of major stakeholders and empaneled by the Government Leader. Where relevant, the *TF* should be integrated with existing committees.
Facilitation and technical assistance of the design phase	Consultants, national and/or international under the responsibility of the Government Leader; international organization(s)
Data collection at the various levels, not only 'forestry data'	➢ Governmental organisations, not only from the forest sector, ➢ The private sector ➢ Non-governmental organisations
Channeling views of groups in society on what monitoring questions need to be answered (in the FGM design phase, possibly also later)	Participating stakeholders in meetings, CSOs
Coordinating the selecting, summarising, and	Government unit(s) at different levels

Table 22: Key roles and responsibilities	
analyzing of indicator variables; managing FGM databases	
Provision of data on selected initiatives	Government, Public Private Partnerships, NGOs, community organizations etc.

5. Conclusion and outlook

Strengthening forest governance is a long-term ambition for which good and timely monitoring data is one key requisite. The initiative "Integrating forest governance monitoring into national forest-related monitoring systems" of the FAO Forestry Department aims to contribute to this. It applied a conceptual model for forest governance monitoring derived from the Framework for Assessing and Monitoring Forest Governance as developed by the FAO and the World Bank and several other organizations, operationalizing it as integral part of existing national monitoring that is readily adoptable and adaptable to the specific country conditions. Such monitoring should be capable of fulfilling national forest governance information needs as well as international forest governance reporting requirements and commitments.

The synthesis of the country experiences to date and the adjusted conceptual model form the basis for this FAO working paper. It intends to inform national governments of key aspects of, and preliminary experiences with, the development and operationalization of national forest governance monitoring that can be integrated in, and built on, existing in-country forest-related monitoring systems and routines.

Countries might benefit from more in-depth guidance on specific areas of work in strengthening forest governance monitoring systems and routines. For example, while most of the REDD+ readiness plans developed under the FCPF state the need to assess and monitor forest governance, they offer little information on how this is to be accomplished. A similar need for assessing and monitoring improvement in forest governance arises under the implementation of Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) under the European Union's FLEGT Action Plan.

In an effort to share lessons learnt in different initiatives, representatives of relevant initiatives as well as field practitioners involved in forest governance data collection and indicator development through these initiatives discuss experiences in mid 2012. This should allow to develop further guidance to practitioners on forest governance data collection and to create a community-of-practice of forest governance practitioners.

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ANNEX 1: EXAMPLE OF A TOR FOR A NATIONAL CONSULTANT

Objectives and Scope

The objective of the assignment is to assist in development and piloting of a system for monitoring forest governance as part of forest-related monitoring that is capable of fulfilling national forest governance information needs in .... as well as international reporting requirements and commitments.

Tasks:

1) Based on drafts provided by the international consultant, prepare a short concept note for a forest governance monitoring consultation workshop in .... (*inter alia* to be used as formal invitation text), the first draft of the agenda, list of participants (at national, provincial & district levels) for the national workshop, which would be finalized with input from authorities, FAO and international consultants.

2) Prepare a background paper on forest governance monitoring in .... Propose a list of documents to be analysed for the background paper, as well as a list of experts to be interviewed before the workshop (relevant government officers from different bodies, national and provincial, civil society organizations, private sector stakeholders). The background paper should present information compiled from documentation and interviews. Based on this information, the paper should present the current situation with regard to forest governance monitoring (why, what, who, where, when, how). It should highlight related key issues and main questions on which the workshop should provide concrete, practical recommendations. This paper will be based on guidance on methods to use, structure and contents of the paper by the international consultant.

3) Based on feedback provided by the Government of ….. and the international consultants on drafts, finalize the background paper and prepare a corresponding presentation to be delivered at the consultation workshop.

4) Together with Government of …. staff and the international consultants, organize and facilitate the national consultation workshop.

5) Based on input and feedback provided by the government and the international consultants, finalize the report of the workshop.
   As and if proposed by the consultation workshop, prepare a proposal for further actions, including possible assistance for the government in the establishment of a multistakeholder task force and/or working group for FGM to guide and support the process.

The national consultant will receive a "guidance package" of documents related to background on forest governance and forest governance monitoring. This also includes generic templates on concept note, draft agenda, guidance on documents to analyse, interviews to conduct, table of contents of the background document, report of the workshop, draft ToR for task force/working group to establish, etc. These generic documents need to be adjusted and made concrete for the specific context and situation in Vietnam. The international consultants are to provide guidance throughout all stages of the assignment.

Expected Outputs:

1) A concept note, draft agenda for the consultation workshop, proposed list of documents to be analysed for the background paper, proposed list of experts to be interviewed, proposed list of participants to be invited to the workshop .

2) A background report for the national consultation workshop, incl. an annex detailing the documents analysed, and short transcripts of interviews held with key stakeholders on the FGM framework for ....

3) A task list of preparing the workshop (administration, logistics) and agreed distribution of roles with co-organisers (NFA, GOVN).

4) A presentation of the background paper at the national workshop, facilitation of the workshop (moderating discussions, rapporteur, etc., as agreed with the co-organisers).

5) A proposal of further activities as proposed in the consultation workshop (including, a possible multi-stakeholder task force and/or working group (WG) (composition, terms of reference) and a concrete proposal for their establishment (pre- or post workshop, concrete steps to take to make them operational), and a briefing note on steps taken by the national consultant to implement the proposal.

6) A draft report of the national workshop (to be finalized / agreed with the respective Ministry.

ANNEX 2: TOR FOR A NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON FGM

Objective: Create a Task Force to advise and promote the implementation of integrating forest governance into national forest-related monitoring systems

The purpose of the Task Force:
5. To act as champions and promote the initiative to strengthen forest governance monitoring (FGM).
6. To catalyze and direct informed multi-stakeholder consultations in order to develop national priorities and conduct a pilot application of strengthened FGM as part of forest-related monitoring.
7. To see to that integrated FGM is readily adoptable and adaptable by the national Government and capable of fulfilling national needs as well as international reporting commitments.

Responsibilities of the Task Force shall include:
1. To facilitate the process of mobilizing and coordinating cross-sectoral support for strengthening FGM, including leading a multi-stakeholder dialogue.
2. To provide guidance and momentum for the design, field implementation, and adaptive learning related to the pilot application of integrated forest governance monitoring.
3. To assist the National Consultant in developing the background paper and preparing for the inception workshop.
4. To facilitate the development of a communication strategy that will guide the process of public dissemination of information on forest governance monitoring.

The Task Force is open to membership from multi-sectoral stakeholders who are:
1. High-level champions of strengthening governance monitoring.
2. From institutions whose mandate is relevant to the forest sector (which may include institutes outside the forest sector);
3. Available to contribute to the work of the Task Force as required;
4. Willing to commit time and energy to the Task Force's work for a minimum of one year.

ANNEX 3: GUIDANCE ON INTERVIEWING OF STAKEHOLDERS

Introduction

This guidance has been designed to help the national consultant conduct interviews with relevant stakeholders. It starts with suggestions on how to select relevant people to be interviewed, and provides information on what issues have to be dealt with during the conversation. This guidance is not meant to be exhaustive and could be adapted with guidance from experts in Government or the Task Force.

Objectives

There are three major objectives for the stakeholder interviews:

1. **Inform the relevant stakeholders about the project**, its objectives, principles, rationale, and implementation. This should promote partnership building and, thus, encourage ownership. At this stage definitions are important. It may be necessary to discuss what 'forest governance' is, and how it can be monitored. While interviewees are likely to understand the various elements of the pillars and principles of forest governance, they may not be used to thinking about them collectively as 'forest governance';

2. **Collect relevant information about data on forest governance monitoring (FGM) in existing monitoring systems**.

3. **Solicit views** regarding FGM, including, *inter alia*, how existing programs can be made more relevant for FGM, appropriate approaches for data collection, and the way these data can be used.

The interviews will be an important way to assess the views, experiences and possible involvement of key stakeholders with regard to strengthening FGM. Regular meetings should be held with the Task Force to keep them apprised of progress.

Suggested interview protocol

- (Before starting the interviews, prepare 'talking points' (e.g., a 2-page summary) about the initiative—including a definition of FG and FGM—and key questions to ask the stakeholders.)
- At the start of each interview, introduce briefly the initiative: e.g., it is within the context of FAO/Finland forest monitoring, but is supported by the national authorities
- Explain the concept of governance & forest governance, with examples (ie, mention the 3 pillars and 6 principles)
- Explore relevance of FGM to the stakeholder (*i.e., salience* to the stakeholder)
- Note that many stakeholders are likely to be both users and producers of data, hence please clarify upfront to what degree they are users and producers, and mix the questions accordingly.
- People could come up with fairly general appreciations of FGM like: "efficiency is OK in the forest sector, but there is a general need for more equity and transparency". However, if such observations are made, try to force people to be more specific: where exactly is the issue, let them give examples. Also, ask them to think about how monitoring can help generate the equity and transparency they desire.
- Keeping comprehensive notes are necessary in order to share with other members of, for example, the Task Force and Work Groups.

- Note: because the interviews are likely to be fairly unstructured, the questions below are in the form of a memo, not a questionnaire.

Questions for those who *use* monitoring data
- Question 1a: What data/information related to forest governance do you routinely use:
  - Strategy development and operational (annual or other) work planning,
  - Implementation and evaluation reports on annual work plans;
  - Legal and regulation developments, law enforcement, judicial system;
  - Budget planning, expenditure reporting, oversight of expenditure, benefit sharing with forest owners, communities local groups etc.
  - Data and information on transparency (e.g. corruption), accountability, participation, etc.
  - Allocation procedures for forests & forest concessions
  - Non-timber forest products (NTFPs, such as charcoal and/or firewood)
  - Trade of timber/NTFPs
  - Middlemen (licensing, how many, amount of product traded)
  - Land tenure (zoning changes, community titles registered, land/resource claim disputes)
  - Employment/labour (# of workers in different positions, seasonal employment, community cooperatives)
  - Participation (information on how many and who is invited/attended meetings on sensitization, working groups, comment periods)
  - Violations (penalties, prosecutions)
  - Employment/labor
  - Auditing
  - International reporting
- Question 1b: At what level do you use the data (central, district, local/community, etc.)?
- Question 2: What existing FGM initiatives ARE ALREADY working well, and to what they attribute their success? And then ask what isn't working well, and why?
- Question 3: On what governance issues would you like to have more monitoring data? What data do you wish you had or that could be improved? Could you specify the answer for national, level, provincial level and local level?
- Question 4: Who else should we speak to?
- Question 5: What documents/data should we look into and analyze?

You could also ask:
- Regarding data quality for the existing monitoring: Are you aware of any mechanism to cross-check the accuracy of the data? How well do these mechanisms function and how might they be improved?
- What are their motivations for supporting (or opposing) strengthening FGM?
- Are there issues regarding access to information?
- What are obstacles to/elements for success (ask open ended first, then provide list for ranking)
  - Technical capacity
  - Financial resources
  - Quality assurance and quality control of data
  - Political support/leadership
  - Buy-in/participation from middle management/decentralized offices
  - Cross-sectoral coordination, clarity of authority and jurisdiction

- o   Cooperation from private sector
- o   Communication with/participation of NGOs/communities
- o   Independent oversight

Questions for those who *produce* monitoring data:
- Question 1: What existing forest governance aspects do you collect data about? What issues do you see in the quality of these data? Under which of the three pillars would that information fit?
- Question 2: What data/information related to forest governance would you like to have, and what would you suggest to strengthen as a priority? How could this be done?
- Question 3: Who else should we speak to? Who else is collecting information relevant for FGM?
- Question 4: What documents/data should we look into and analyze?

ANNEX 4: GUIDANCE FOR THE BACKGROUND PAPER

Introduction

Prior to the Inception Workshop, the national consultant (NC) will prepare a background paper. This note aims to provide guidance to the NC on how to structure the background paper in a way that it provides adequate input to the Workshop (WS) and its discussions, leading to relevant, practical and actionable recommendations regarding key issues and the way forward on FGM.

Objective of the Background Paper

The Background Paper should set the scene on FGM (what is FG, why is it important, what is FGM), provide a preliminary status analysis on the demand and supply of FGM information in Vietnam (who collects what information, how, when, where, where is it stored, who uses it, how and when, and what for, as well as an evaluation of data quality and accessibility). The Paper should also provide input to the discussions at the WS on future demands and supply (the why, what, who, where, when of FGM), as well as on priority actions for the way forward. For each of these questions there can be a set of key issues to discuss by WS participants, and subsequently recommendations from the WS.

Note: Not all the analyses conducted by the National Consultant needs to appear in the Background Paper. Some of the more sensitive political analysis will, however, be useful in providing background information for facilitating the Inception Workshop and, more importantly, in the project's work plan.

Outline of Background Paper

This outline is still provisional and based on preliminary experiences in Zambia and Vietnam.

1. Background

2. Rationale for strengthening FGM in Vietnam

        2.1 What is Forest Governance?

        2.2 Why strengthen forest governance?

        2.3 Why monitor forest governance?

        2.4 Principles of effective forest governance monitoring

        2.5 Considerations for prioritizing and sequencing forest governance monitoring

3. Forest governance monitoring in [country]– the current status

        3.1   Policy, legislative and budgetary framework related FGM

        The chapter could be structured by using the legal frame work relevant for the forest sector in the country. If a country has a Forest Strategy in which an overview is made of the relevant legal frame work, and relevant forest related governmental programmes (e.g. for investment, production, protection etc.) then this can be used a s a start. For each item of the strategy or law, or plan:

- List the issues/problems/challenges
- Make an inventory of monitoring in place (what is being monitored already), and
- Suggestions for additional monitoring.
- For each law also an assessment can be made as to planning and decision-making processes, and implementation aspects (pillars 2 and 3). In fact this would be a sub-division under each law. Sometimes there are specific laws which regulate issues regarding transparency, participation, accountability.

        3.2   Main initiatives relevant to FGM in Vietnam (national and international)
        This section emerging themes like REDDD+ and FLEGT can be dealt with and their specific needs for monitoring.

4. FGM assessed by 3 pillars and 6 principles

        In this chapter all information can be put that did not fit under the framework of laws and emerging issues mentioned in the previous chapter.

5. Discussion: the way forward (issues and perspectives)

        This part is a main input for the workshop group discussion sessions, and provides a structure for the recommendations expected from the Workshop.

Example: Table of contents of the Vietnamese background document

ANNEX 5: CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE INCEPTION WORKSHOP

Introduction and purpose of this concept note

The purpose of this concept note is to set out the ideas on the preparation and organization of the anticipated Inception Workshop on Forest Governance Monitoring. The objective of the workshop is to contribute to a shared understanding on the current status of forest governance monitoring in the country and how it can be strengthened, including the identification of follow-up steps. This concept note needs to be adjusted by each country. The text can then be used for the written invitation to the workshop by the organizers.

Background

Forest governance is a key aspect of sustainable forest management (SFM), including related policy and planning, implementation, monitoring and improvement, as well as the legislative and institutional arrangements. Due to the increasing recognition of the importance of forest governance quality on progress towards SFM and the reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+), increasingly many efforts are taken to monitor and report forest governance and governance quality. Several initiatives and different methodologies exist for monitoring and reporting forest governance, including those related to Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG), reporting based on SFM criteria and indicators, and on international agreements, as well as those of the World Bank. Recently, the REDD negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change have agreed on safeguards that relate to forest governance, further increasing the need for monitoring. However, and perhaps most importantly, forest governance monitoring systems at the country level need to meet national monitoring needs in order to be relevant. This means that monitoring of forest governance should be most of all useful to better fulfill *national* and local priorities for forest management. Any forest governance monitoring that should be established by countries needs to be feasible, cost-effective, verifiable, allow reliable measurement of change over time, and fulfill international reporting requirements.

To meet these goals, the Government of Vietnam (MARD) has requested the assistance of FAO to help integrate forest governance monitoring into national forest-related monitoring systems. To this end, FAO is providing support through the services of a national consultant and international technical consultants. Together the consultants will work with the Government of Vietnam and other Vietnamese organizations to assess the present status of FGM and propose steps to develop a preliminary proposal for strengthening FG monitoring, which will be evaluated at a multi-stakeholder workshop and then piloted.

Work on forest governance monitoring will be undertaken in the context of the recently started FAO/Finland project on a National Forest Monitoring and Assessment (NFMA). It should also build on earlier efforts to information systems. It would thus focus on the field level, building on existing systems and routines, and be closely coordinated with other relevant initiatives, including on REDD+ and FLEGT.

Objectives

The objective of the Workshop is to inform, consult on, and get recommendations on the direction, including next steps to take, and ways of engagement in further work on strengthening FGM in

Vietnam, building on existing mechanisms and initiatives (- with international support in the context of developing an National Forest Accounting).

The specific objectives of the workshop are:

To introduce the initiative to strengthen FGM, and its rationale

To discuss and verify the current status of FGM in Vietnam

To discuss and recommend on practical and concrete steps to strengthen FGM, and define a road map.

Key outcomes

Key Outcomes from the workshop include:

The initiative is understood by key stakeholders, who support it and feel sufficiently involved, and share a common vision on the vital aspects of FGM.

A first set of critical aspects of forest governance is identified and suggestions made on the way they can be monitored with *existing* means, procedures and data.

A first set of new priority themes to be monitored and preliminary suggestions about what *additional* data could be collected for their monitoring.

Determination of the way FGM can be embedded in existing monitoring efforts and how it will be further developed by interested ministries, agencies and stakeholders. This includes an assessment of the opportunities for partnerships.

A common understanding about what next steps will be taken and how stakeholders will be kept informed during the process.

Proposed workshop agenda

The following is a proposed provisional workshop agenda. It can be adapted according to new insights obtained during interviews/discussions with stakeholders and the government and on review of documents of projects and programmes in the country relevant for FGM. The agenda would include:

Introduction of the participants.

Introduction of the concept of forest governance; rationale for monitoring forest governance, benefits for different stakeholders.

Presentation of the background paper on existing data collection and stakeholder needs.

Presentations of views of national stakeholders on needs for FGM, from national, local and provincial perspective

Presentations of other initiatives relevant for FGM (e.g. internationally initiated initiatives for REDD and FLEGT)

Stakeholder deliberation on key aspects of forest governance monitoring needs and monitoring approaches (group discussions on key aspects of forest governance monitoring, at local, provincial and national level).

Planning of next steps, including identifying a Working Group; outlining specific roles and responsibilities to further develop forest governance indicators, pilot activities, and a communication strategy to keep stakeholders informed and involved in the process.

Expected Participants

Government agencies relevant to forest governance (e.g., Forestry, Finance, Information/Statistics, Planning, Justice, Police, etc.) at the national level, and to the degree possible at the regional and local level.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working at national as well as regional and local levels, such as environmental organizations, human rights organizations, revenue transparency organizations, educational and training organizations, etc.;

Community-based organizations (CBOs), especially those that represent forest-dependent and indigenous communities;

Private sector;

National academics and research centers

Labour-market players (*i.e.,* trade unions and employers federations – the 'social partners');

Organizations representing social and economic players, which are not social partners in the strict sense of the term (for instance, consumer organizations)

See also the guidance on how to identify stakeholders to interview.

ANNEX 6: PROVISIONAL WORKSHOP AGENDA AND DETAILED PREPARATION

Day 0. It is recommended that the workshop leaders should go in detail through the programme of the workshop (days 1 and 2) on the day before the workshop together with the president of the meeting, a possible facilitator, the organizing unit (i.e,, those responsible for logistics & means) and the national consultant/team. Important during this preparatory meeting is to define roles during the workshop. As to the group work at the end of day 1 and on day 2, it may be useful to determine in advance:

- Who is president of the meeting
- Who is the general facilitator, especially the general facilitator of any group work.
- Who will facilitate the discussions in the different working groups/break-out sessions, and who will report back to the plenary.
- What are the tasks or questions for the group work.
- Who will make notes during the workshop so that a proper report of the inception event can be produced.
- Who has the final responsibility for preparing the report of the inception workshop.

Day 1. It can be adapted according to new insights obtained during interviews/discussions with stakeholders and the government and on review of documents of projects and programmes in the country relevant to FGM. The agenda would include:

1. Welcome and opening.
2. Opening addresses by a government representative that will express strong political support for the FGM initiative and, if applicable, another main organizer.
3. Introduction of the concept of forest governance from an international perspective; rationale for monitoring forest governance, benefits for different stakeholders.
4. Presentation of current forest monitoring activities, for example the National Forest Assessment.
5. Presentation by the national forest programme (NFP) or comparable platform.
6. Presentation of the background paper on existing data collection and stakeholder needs.
7. Presentations of views of national stakeholders on needs for FGM, from national, local and provincial perspective.
8. Presentations of other initiatives relevant for FGM (e.g. internationally initiated initiatives like REDD+ and FLEGT).
9. Stakeholder deliberation on key aspects of FGM needs and monitoring approaches:
   - Priority areas for starting FGM.
   - Leadership and organizational embedding
   - Other aspects that the stakeholders consider important to discuss
10. Planning of next steps, including identifying a Working Group; outlining specific roles and responsibilities to further develop forest governance indicators, pilot activities, and a communication strategy to keep stakeholders informed and involved in the process.

The **second day** of the workshop has a more open nature, albeit to a much smaller audience (i.e., those likely to be included in the Working Group):

- Recap of the first day: what are the most important insights/lessons learned according to the participants. This is also a way to prepare for the next question:

- What are the priority issues that should be discussed, so that FGM activities can really take off?
- What are issues that need to be discussed in the near future?
- Next steps and division of tasks: who takes leadership and who participates in activities?

Ensure that at the conclusion of day 2 of the workshop there is an agreed (outline of a) plan for further action.

Aftermath. As soon as possible after day 2 of the workshop the consultant/team, the government and other persons assigned to help to continue the FGM process should hold a retreat to finalize the outputs/outcomes and to document the roles and responsibilities for the next steps. The first activity is to finalise the report of the meeting and have it endorsed by relevant authorities.