

Concept Note

International Symposium on Indicators to Assess and Monitor the Quality of Forest Governance

The World Bank, PROFOR and FAO are organizing an international symposium on indicators to assess and monitor the quality of forest governance. The symposium will take stock of progress to date in designing indicators and applying them in the field, including the use of indicators for specific purposes. Areas of application include investment risk analysis, targeting and monitoring of forest reforms, tracking success of anti-corruption initiatives and law enforcement, evaluating poverty alleviation efforts, encouraging sustainable forest management, safeguarding human rights, and improving conflict management. There is special interest in the use of indicators in monitoring FLEGT outcomes (including VPAs), implementing REDD+ and FIP activities.

The two day symposium, hosted by Sida, will convene in Stockholm on September 13-14, 2010.

Background and Rationale: Poor governance is a major impediment to achieving development outcomes in the forest sector. It results in losses of income, employment, government revenues, and local and global environmental services. This is a problem that touches, among others, on rural community development, national energy use, climate change, conservation of biodiversity, indigenous people's rights, and extraction and trade of commercial forest resources.

It is now widely agreed that a comprehensive analytical framework for forest governance is necessary to identify the major shortcomings and to propose fitting responses. Tracking the success of reforms also requires a framework for assessing change. Needed are forest governance indicators that allow countries to diagnose the governance problems in the sector, identify the most critical reforms and to monitor progress. It is also important that these indicators provide a "menu" from which countries can select those most appropriate to their own specific circumstances and needs.¹

Several groups (e.g., Chatham House, Global Witness, World Resources Institute, Transparency International and PROFOR) have been working on developing, field-testing and applying forest governance indicators. In 2009, the World Bank produced a framework for analyzing forest governance, with an eye towards developing a set of governance indicators under the framework. In October 2009, on the margins of the 2nd Dialogue Meeting on REDD, Chatham House, Global Witness, and WRI exchanged views on forest governance monitoring, which led to a broader meeting on the topic in December as a side event at UNFCCC COP 15. In February 2010, the EU organized a meeting on FLEGT

¹ An effective diagnostics framework would ideally include a large number of governance attributes to probe systematically the governance situation in a country context. However, an indicator set, for monitoring purposes, should have only a few, at most a handful of indicators, and should be well grounded in the diagnostics framework.

coordination at the FAO headquarters, at which participants endorsed the idea of an international workshop on forest governance indicators².

In May 2010, Chatham House, in collaboration with UNREDD, organized an expert workshop on monitoring governance safeguards in REDD+. The aim was to improve understanding of what monitoring of governance for REDD+ might entail, drawing on current and past experiences from the forest sector and beyond. A framework of three core governance parameters for REDD+ was presented and this provided the basis for discussion of the question of ‘what to monitor’ for REDD+. The parameters are: i) clear and coherent policy, legal, institutional and regulatory frameworks; ii) effective implementation, enforcement and compliance; and iii) transparent and accountable decision-making and institutions. On the subject of “how to monitor”, the workshop proposed 15 principles for implementing monitoring as a basis for discussion. Participants agreed that further clarification is needed, both in relation to the draft framework of governance parameters and suggested principles for designing and implementing monitoring systems.

Major Objective and Expected Outcomes: The overall objective of the symposium is to move forward towards the development of practical and feasible frameworks for assessing and monitoring the quality of forest governance. The workshop will foster collaboration to avoid overlap and duplication of effort.

The main expected outcomes are an improved understanding among participants of:

- (i) the existing tools and techniques to diagnose and monitor forest governance and the strengths and limitations of these,
- (ii) the inter-linkages between national diagnostic and monitoring needs and emerging international reporting requirements for forest governance,
- (iii) how the needs for indicators vary in specific applications and what they may have in common,
- (iv) how to ensure coherence among ongoing initiatives so that duplication can be eliminated, with attention to harmonization of field-testing and use of the various indicators (to avoid excessive burden on national administrations in the partner countries).

Broad Structure of Symposium and Output: The symposium will address several issues:

- What is it that we are trying to assess and monitor? What are the bounds and components of forest governance?
- What has been the empirical experience with indicators, from both the developers’ and users’ perspective?

² There was unanimous agreement among representatives from the EU, FAO, WB, ITTO, CIFOR, UNFF, and EFI on the need to develop practical and workable forest governance indicators.

- What are the specialized areas of application for indicators (REDD+, anti-corruption, FLEGT/VPAs, etc.), and what measurable governance attributes are of particular relevance to these areas? What are the experiences to date from ongoing such initiatives?
- Can practitioners agree on a basic framework for monitoring forest governance, including the types of indicators needed?
- Given the variety of institutions and their respective aims, how can we best harmonize future work on indicators?

The Symposium will have about 40-45 invited participants (country representatives, representatives of indicator initiatives and development partners) in plenary and breakout discussions.

A keynote presentation will help set the overall framework for the discussions. This will be supported by:

- (a) two background papers: (i) FAO commissioned paper on indicator development to date, (ii) EFI commissioned paper on the governance attributes relevant to FLEGT and VPA initiatives;
- (b) outcomes from the Chatham House/UNREDD meeting focusing on governance monitoring for REDD+; and,
- (c) experiences from field testing of the World Bank and WRI diagnostic approaches.

The symposium will be the first in a series of similar events to generate continued high-level attention to these issues.

The main output from the Symposium will be a roadmap for the next steps in the development of practical forest governance indicators. Finally, a report on the Symposium proceedings will be produced to facilitate dissemination of the main conclusions and promote wider discussions.