

Independent Forest Monitoring



CIDT Improving Forest Governance course

Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM)

This material is based on the modular training materials for IFM developed by David Young for CIDT and Global Witness. From these materials, this is from Module b: *Setting up an IFM initiative* — Part 1: *Introduction to IFM*, Presentation c.1.2.

What does this presentation cover?



- Terminology
- Independent forest monitoring – definition
- Civil society-led independent forest monitoring
- Community-based independent forest monitoring
- Forest control, IFM and VPA Independent Audit
- Other forms of monitoring in the forest sector
- Aims and aspirations of different stakeholders for IFM
- Lessons
- Challenges

Terminology



IFM = OIF = IM = IO	CS-IFM = OIF-SC = OIE	CB-IFM
Independent forest monitoring	Civil society-led independent forest monitoring	Community-based IFM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official IFM • Independent observation • Independent monitoring • IM-FLEG / OI-FLEG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-mandated monitoring • Observation indépendante externe • External monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An extension of CS-IFM • Often associated with real-time monitoring • Our forest
<p><i>Experience so far in Cameroon, CAR, DRC, Honduras, Nicaragua and RoC.</i></p>	<p><i>Experience mainly in Cameroon, Ghana, CAR, DRC, Indonesia, Liberia, and RoC.</i></p>	<p><i>From Guyana, Indonesia (Aceh), Peru. Under development in Congo Basin.</i></p>

I(F)M – definition and basics



Original definition:

An *independent third party* that by *agreement with state authorities* provides an *assessment of legal compliance, observation* of and *guidance* on official forest governance systems.

IFM is most applicable in the following circumstances:

- where the forest resource has an international value (economic, social and environmental);
- where illegality is significant and political will for reform is low;
- and where there is some sort of system to monitor but also calls for reform from citizens, some officials and donors.

CS-IFM



- CS-IFM is not bound by a Terms of Reference or mandate
- It is free to investigate a wider range of irregularities – not only the VPA, not only the forest sector
- CS-IFM is more restricted in access to official information
- It may also be prevented from accessing forest locations
- Self-mandated monitors fear co-option, a loss of independence, if they were to operate under a mandate
- CS-IFM enables many organisations and actors to have role in IFM
- CS-IFM can publish reports with or without prior review
- CS-IFM may be perceived as lacking legitimacy

CB-IFM



- CB-IFM has many of the same attributes (on previous slide) as CS-IFM.
- It is said to have a big advantage that it potentially involves many more people – too many to persecute.
- Often it is conducted in forests that have customary community tenure – thus the ‘forest owners’ have a right to monitor.
- It may focus more on forest management than documenting irregularities.
- Alternatively, it can be similar to the idea of ‘citizen reporting’
- It may not be suited to more complex and intractable illegalities.

Forest control in contrast to IFM or IA



- Enforcement and control are the sovereign and permanent functions of the State.
- Based on the legislative framework: the forest law, regulations, decrees... and the organisational structure of forest authority
- They are organised, planned and led by the forest authority.
- And conducted by sworn officers, with a status similar to the police

The State

Enforcement: To identify, find and punish those who fail to follow the forest law.

Control: To ensure legal forest operations, transport, processing and trade.

Auditors

Audit the positive performance and deficiencies in the VPA legality assurance system.

Report to the Joint Implementation Committee.

Monitors

Observe and investigate individual failures where policy objectives are not being met.

Propose to the authorities, in public, resolutions to individual cases and the system.

Other forms of monitoring



- Systems using satellite imagery
 - Global Forest Watch, “tracking deforestation in near-real-time”:
www.globalforestwatch.org
- Monitoring & REDD+
 - Measurement Reporting and Verification: www.carbon2markets.org;
www.globalcanopy.org/projects/Forest-COMPASS
 - Safeguards Information Systems: www.redd-standards.org/
- VPA Impact Monitoring
- Indicator-based monitoring
- Advocacy-driven monitoring

Ten principles of IFM



1. Independence
2. An official mandate
3. A Terms of Reference
4. A transparent recruitment process
5. Appropriate technical capacity and resources
6. Unhindered access to information
7. Unhindered access to forest locations
8. A public profile and accessibility
9. A multi-stakeholder reporting panel
10. The right to publish

Aims and aspirations for IFM



Governments	Private sector	CSOs	Donors
<p>want to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ...	<p>wants to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ...	<p>want to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ...	<p>want to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ...

Aims and aspirations for IFM



Governments	Private sector	Civil society	Donors
<p>want to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• improve sustainable forest management• increase tax income• support internal ‘champions’ of reform• maintain legitimacy by responding to calls for good governance	<p>wants to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• counter undercutting of profits by illegal operators• counter demands for bribes from corrupt officials• improve international reputation and maintain/gain markets	<p>want to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• protect the rights of forest-dependent communities• ensure sustainable and collective use of the forest• give local communities a voice	<p>want to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• increase accountability• ensure value for money in development assistance• show impact in governance improvements

Lessons



- A primarily **investigatory** approach, looking for gaps and problems, rather than an indicator-led evaluation approach
- Regular reports of the monitor's activities, against **agreed objectives**, providing an overview of progress beyond individual cases and thus a degree of accountability.
- Information management of critical importance as it's your **evidence**.
- **Political will**: need to engage policy-makers, media etc better: package information for them; build relationships with them; take advantage of VPA institutions.
- Develop a mechanism for **2-way communication** with communities.
- Explore further technical developments

Strategic Challenges



- What is the right balance between a core of well-trained experienced, legally competent monitors and a wide network of lay-monitors?
- Do we want a close relationship or minimal contact with forest law enforcement agencies?
- Do we like the linear denouncement-verification-report-advocacy approach?
- Who should we report to? And how does this change if/when tenure is more community-based?
- Citizen reporting: can we aim directly at demand-side measures (and skip NGOs and governments)?

Success Factors and way forward

– shaping policy/practice with IFM evidence

Don't imagine that if you publish, impact will follow: be persistent, develop networks, and find the right moment

Do your homework – identify potential allies and opponents (national and international): alliances, insiders, progressive elements

Don't think the evidence speaks for itself: target needs, sift, synthesise, provide accessible/usable information

Innovation – Technology: mobile phones, satellite, drones etc

Have patience, and lots of it: sustainable change takes time

