

Our Partners



Centre pour l'Environnement et le Développement, Cameroon

CED's mission is to contribute to the protection of the rights, interests, culture and aspirations of local communities and indigenous peoples of the forests of Central Africa, through the promotion of environmental justice and the sustainable management of natural resources in the region. CED was established in 1994 in reaction to a significant increase in industrial logging and the expansion of illegal forestry activity. www.cedcameroun.org



Réseau Ressources Naturelles, Democratic Republic of Congo

Réseau Ressources Naturelles is a platform 256 environmental and human rights Civil Society Organisations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, present in the 11 provinces of DRC, with a national coordination office in Kinshasa. RRN's objective is to promote a rational and sustainable use of natural resources in order for them to contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of local communities and indigenous people, while preserving ecosystems and biodiversity for future generations. www.rnrndc.org



Grupo FARO, Ecuador

Grupo FARO undertakes independent investigations related to public policies and promoting active participation from civil society, the private sector and state institutions in the design, implementation and monitoring of local and national public policies. Its goal is to support the consolidation of a more efficient, equitable, inclusive and democratic Ecuadorean state. www.grupofaro.org



Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organisational Development, Ghana

The main mission of the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organisational Development (CIKOD) is to develop methodologies for the strengthening of traditional authorities and CSOs to facilitate sustainable grassroots organisational development that gives voice to the poor and vulnerable rural families. www.cikod.org



Ut'z Che, Guatemala

The Guatemala Community Forestry Association Ut'z Che' is a civil association which groups together and represents, at a national level, indigenous communities and local organisations devoted to the sustainable management of their natural resources, principally forests, forestry plantations and water sources. www.utzchecomunitaria.org



Sustainable Development Institute, Liberia

The Sustainable Development Institute (SDI) is working to transform and improve natural resource-related decision-making processes in Liberia. The SDI focuses on resource governance, corruption, community benefits and public participation; in 2006, it received the Goldman Environmental Prize for outstanding environmental achievements in Africa. www.sdiliberia.org



Derecho Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, Peru

Derecho Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (DAR) priority is to contribute to the sustainable development of Peru, through environmental management, conservation of areas of biological diversity, and improvement in the management of natural resources, by promoting and participating in development initiatives related to social responsibility in the public and private sectors. www.dar.org.pe



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Making the Forest Sector Transparent

www.foresttransparency.info



global witness

For 17 years, Global Witness has run pioneering campaigns against natural resource-related conflict and corruption and associated environmental and human rights abuses. The organisation has exposed the brutality and injustice that results from the fight to access and control natural resource wealth. Building on its 12 years of experience in Independent Forest Monitoring, Global Witness has been implementing since 2008 the *Making the Forest Sector Transparent* programme to improve forest governance worldwide.

Making the Forest Sector Transparent works with civil society groups in forest-rich countries to engage with policymakers and advocate for capable, responsive and accountable forest sector governance. The programme supports local environmental and human rights campaigners in seven countries to monitor transparency and to advocate on issues of importance to local communities. To achieve this, Global Witness has formed partnerships with local NGOs in Peru, Ecuador, Ghana, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guatemala and Liberia.

Making the Forest Sector Transparent is:

- Developing an innovative 'Forest Transparency Report card' and an **Annual Transparency Report** to assess the level of information in the public domain. People need information about rights to access forests and benefit from their use, and about government policies, to have a say in management of forest resources.
- **Strengthening civil society capacity** to effectively use information on forest use and management in their country to demand changes to forest management. People need to have the motivation and skills to convince governments to listen to and respond to their needs.
- **Building an effective network** to exchange experiences and coordinate activities. This strengthens our response to the globalisation of the trade in forest products and services, and to forest initiatives such as Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs), Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and a mechanism to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+). Coalitions help to build a measure of political protection for advocacy work that may challenge the status quo.

The Forest Transparency Report Card assesses the level of public access to information and decision-making on an annual basis. The report card takes a rights-based approach. It is both top-down, looking at the legal obligations each state has to enhance transparency and participation (including reference to the individual country constitution, any freedom of information legislation, and any sector-specific laws), and bottom-up, working with forest-dependent communities to identify information needs in order that communities can assert their rights, and hold duty-bearers (government and others) accountable.

Demand for good governance is driven by civil society being equipped to, and having an interest in, holding governments to account. Governments will respond when citizens identify and voice their needs and expectations and persuade policy-makers to make and implement fair and effective 'rules', including instituting legal reforms, tackling criminality and corruption, and engaging with civil society. Policymakers have an interest in greater participation as this improves the sustainability of outcomes.

At the local level, all of the partner countries face problems stemming from large-scale export-driven commercial exploitation of forests, too often obtaining and operating permits in breach of sector laws. Moreover, as in many forest-rich-but-poor countries, decisions over how those forests are managed and sustained are often made behind closed doors, by an elite minority who have vested interests which seldom benefit the vast majority of local, and often very poor.

Thus a starting point for the report card design work, and for the advocacy work the programme is supporting is to promote customary rights, multi-stakeholder participation and environmentally responsible forest management.



Our findings

The three Annual Transparency Reports produced by each civil society partner in the programme so far show that governments have announced a range of commitments to improve transparency over forest sector management. These include: better and earlier public consultation, greater public disclosure of key documents, and some increase in support to small landowners to protect their forests. In addition, four of the seven forest-rich countries now have freedom of information laws that include commitments to providing information on forest sector management.

Worryingly however, very few of these commitments are being acted on and in the case of the freedom of information laws, not one forest authority is meeting its obligations.

The report cards also raise concerns that commercial interests for land, mining, oil and agricultural plantations are still taking precedent over the need to protect forests and the communities that depend on them. All too often government bodies compete to strike a deal with a favoured investor, rather than working together in the interests of preserving forests or recognising the long-term public goods they can provide.

The findings of the 2011 Report Card are summarised below, through 20 key transparency indicators. The traffic light system indicates for each of these indicators whether clear provisions exist and information on them is publicly available, resulting in a 'yes', 'partial', or 'no' overall. For more information on each of the indicators and a detailed analysis per country of for the whole programme, please visit our website: www.foresttransparency.info

Key: ● - **Yes**: the information exists and is available / ● - **Partial**: the information is incomplete or only partially available / ● - **No**: the information does not exist or is not available / ● - **Not applicable**.

	 Cameroon	 Ghana	 Liberia	 Peru	 Ecuador	 Guatemala	 DRC
Freedom of Information Law	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
National Forest Policy	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Codified Forest Laws and Norms	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Signed International Trade Agreements on Forests	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Provisions for Transparency in Forest Laws	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Legal Recognition of Customary and Traditional Rights	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Procedure for consultation on new forest-related norms	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Law recognising right to free prior informed consent	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
National land tenure policy	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Land ownership and forest use maps	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Regulated permit system for logging operations	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Stakeholder consultation before allocation of logging permits	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Verification Process of the Eligibility of Permit Applicants	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Forest Management Plans	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Regulation of Environmental Services	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Strategic environmental assessment of development priorities	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Independent monitoring of forest governance and operations	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Forestry Tax Collection and Funding Systems	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Forest Infractions	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Annual Forest Authority Report	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Our results

Based on the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the report cards, Global Witness and its partners have led advocacy initiatives to improve governance and transparency in the forest sector in each of our seven partner countries. *Making the Forest Sector Transparent* has thus been instrumental in achieving key changes. The main results of our advocacy work in 2011 include:

- In **Cameroon**, 'small titles' a type of logging permit issued through a discretionary, administrative process and widely criticised for being abused, were finally suspended after a series of exposés and lobbying by the programme partner, CED. Ten officials were also suspended. The recent increase in the issuance of various borderline legal titles in Ghana and Liberia as well as Cameroon was highlighted in the Annual Transparency Report, suggesting that illegal operators may be seeking ways to lock-in some form of legal cover prior to the full commencement of the VPAs.
- In **Cameroon**, two local Civil Society Organisations benefiting from the programme's mini-grant scheme have enhanced access to decision-making for the traditional leadership of some 200,000 people, and the indigenous peoples' network of some 60,000 people have gained access to the law reform process.
- In the **DRC** the programme has focussed on the social clauses ('cahiers des charges') included in logging concession agreements. The new-style agreements determine amongst other things how a significant share of revenue will be utilised by affected communities. Programme partner RRN has supported communities in their negotiations for some 15 of these, ensuring that they receive adequate information and capacity building to claim fair compensation for the logging of their forests. Our Congolese partner is also at the heart of a new regulation on artisanal logging in North Kivu Province, leading the drafting process of the first ever provincial forest edict in the country.
- In **Ecuador**, programme partner Grupo FARO succeeded in expanding the space for consultation on the definitive national REDD+ strategy, the National Programme Document. The first draft produced by the Ministry of Environment was available for comment in September 2010 for just six days, but in response to civil society requests, the second draft, in January 2011, was available for three weeks. Ecuador consequently received US\$4 million from UN-REDD, one of few countries who succeeded in obtaining funding at the time.
- In **Ghana**, the programme has enabled nearly 10,000 people to engage directly with local officials, through a large number of community-level grants. These interactions – happening as they do at the level forest-dependent people operate – are key to long-term change in power relations.
- In **Guatemala**, programme partner Ut'z Che' successfully lobbied for much greater participation, in particular by indigenous groups and *campesino* groups in the REDD+ Preparedness Proposal (RPP), as a complementary yet parallel method of consultation, because the formal institutional structure does not necessarily reflect traditional ways of consultation in these local communities. This means that the RPP is far more inclusive and wide reaching than previously, defining the way in which important international agreements will be implemented in Guatemala.
- In **Liberia**, programme partner SDI has prioritised the legal establishment of, and good governance within Community Forestry Development Committees, which represent community interests in relations with the state and logging companies. Groups of this nature do not exist in the region, and other partners in Ghana and Cameroon look to Liberia as a model in terms of community rights in forest areas.
- In **Peru**, after many failed previous attempts, two new laws have been passed, in a process where our partner DAR played a major technical and mediation role, bringing lawmakers, indigenous peoples' representatives and technical experts to the table to negotiate. This newly consultative and transparent approach has seen the opposing parties jointly draft a new forest law and a law on free prior informed consultation of indigenous peoples. The second of these is key, as it should ensure the government consults civil society on any new legislation relating to forest use.

