Multi-stakeholder design of forest governance and accountability arrangements in Equator province, Democratic Republic of Congo

Dieuwke Klaver

Capacity Development and Institutional Change Programme
Wageningen International, The Netherlands

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Logs and charcoal at the port at Bikoro, Equator Province © D. Klaver.

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Contents

Acknowledgements . . . ii
Abbreviations . . . ii
Summary . . . iii
Résumé . . . v

1 Introduction . . . 1
The research questions . . . 1
Methodology . . . 1
Structure of the report . . . 2

2 Forest governance and SVBC – the context . . . 3
Forest concessions and the forest law . . . 3
Population and forest issues . . . 3
Decentralisation and forest governance . . . 5
Strengthening Voices for Better Choices (SVBC) . . . 6
Achievements and added value of the platforms in forest governance . . . 6
Conclusions. . . . 8

3 Defining forest governance . . . 9
Good forest governance . . . 9
Good forest governance in Equator province . . . 10
The way forward . . . 12
Conclusions. . . . 13

4 Social accountability for improved forest governance . . . 15
Accountability and social accountability . . . 15
The design of social accountability mechanisms . . . 15
Accountability relations in Equator province. . . . 16
Designing social accountability relations – the way forward. . . . 18
Conclusions . . . 20

5 Reflections on governance, accountability and action research methodologies . . . 21
Forest governance . . . 21
Accountability. . . . 22
Action learning and research . . . 23

6 Promoting forest governance and accountability – conclusions and recommendations . . . 24
Answering the research questions . . . 24
Recommendations for IUCN . . . 25
Recommendations for future action research. . . . 26

Bibliography . . . 27
Annexes . . . 28

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Abbreviations

ACREPADE	*Action Pour la Réconciliation, Paix et Développement* (Action for Reconciliation, Peace and Development)
AFLEG	African Forest Law Enforcement and Governance Process
AI	Appreciative Inquiry
ANR	*Agence Nationale de Renseignements* (National Intelligence Agency)
CAIG	*Centre d'Animation et d'Information pour la Gouvernance Forestière* (Centre of Leadership and Information for Forest Governance)
CCGF	*Comité Consultatif pour la Gouvernance Forestière* (Consultative Committee for Forest Governance)
CCPE	*Comité de Coordination des Peuples Ekonda* (Ekonda Peoples Coordinating Committee)
CDV	*Comité de Dialogue et de Vigilance* (Dialogue and Vigilance Committee)
CESI	Community Empowerment & Social Inclusion
CMO	*Comité des Minorités Opprimées* (Committee of Oppressed Minorities)
COMIFAC	*Conférence des Ministres en Charge des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale* (Central African Forest Commission)
CSO	Civil society organisation
DGM	*Direction Générale de Migration* (Directorate-General for Migration)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EU	European Union
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
ITB	*Industries de Transformation des Bois* (Wood Processing Industries)
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MSC	Most Significant Change
MSP	Multi-stakeholder process
NPM	New Public Management
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PREM	Poverty Reduction & Economic Management Network
REBOGOF	*Réseau pour la Bonne Gouvernance Forestière* (Provincial Network for Good Forest Governance)
REPEQ	*Réseau des Pygmées de l'Equateur* (Equator Pygmies Network)
SODEFOR	*Société de Développement Forestier* (Forest Development Corporation)
SSC	*Société pour la Solidarité et la Conservation* (Society for Solidarity and Conservation)
SVBC	Strengthening Voices for Better Choices
UDME	*Union pour le Développement des Minorités Ekonda* (Union for the Development of Ekonda Minorities)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	The World Bank
WI	Wageningen International
WRI	World Resources Institute

Summary

Good forest governance is an increasingly important topic for stakeholders in many different settings around the world. Two of the best-known international initiatives to improve forest governance are the regional Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) ministerial processes supported by the World Bank, and the European Union's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan.

Designed to support and complement such initiatives, the IUCN project "Strengthening Voices for Better Choices" (SVBC) is piloting improved forest governance arrangements in six countries in Africa, Asia and South America. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), one of three project countries in Africa, SVBC has created multi-stakeholder platforms at local, territorial and provincial levels for this purpose.

In 2008, Wageningen International launched a research programme on "Multi-stakeholder Processes in Governing for Sustainability". Its objectives include developing new insights and methodologies to analyse and support governance in sustainable natural resource management.

Wageningen International and IUCN joined forces in Bikoro territory of Equator province, DRC, to study four questions:

1. What is good forest governance according to the stakeholders involved at different levels in SVBC?
2. What type of accountability arrangements are needed for improved forest governance?
3. What potential do the structures established by SVBC have to improve forest governance and, in particular, accountability?
4. What are the implications for analysing forest governance and accountability in other contexts, including interventions and the action research needed to strengthen them?

This report provides some answers to these questions, as well as recommendations for IUCN's approach and for further action research on accountability arrangements.

Table 1 Stakeholder concerns in forest governance, Equator province

Platform	Issue
Local	► Being able to denounce harmful practices to responsive public authorities ► Equity in sharing forest revenues and resources among the local population ► Conflicts managed locally without intervention by the provincial court
Territorial	*The above issues, plus* ► A coherent regulatory framework that guides stakeholder interventions in the forest sector ► Adequate law enforcement ► Transparency in tax collection and expenditure
Provincial	► Equity in sharing forest revenues and resources by the local population ► Transparency in tax collection and expenditure
All levels	► Civil society participation in decision making ► Acceptance of the forest law as a binding set of rules ► Decentralisation of tax collection and expenditure ► Information, education and communication (IEC)

Answers to the research questions

Table 1 lists the important issues in good forest governance as identified by SVBC's stakeholders.

Some of these issues can be addressed by the platforms created with IUCN's support, but others are beyond the project's control. These include decentralisation, the gaps in the regulatory framework, the exclusion of health and education agencies from the social contract (*cahier des charges*) between timber companies and local populations, the energy crisis in Kinshasa (DRC's capital), and a failing justice sector which is weakening respect for human rights.

The study also revealed that public sector performance in forest governance is weak. So too is the performance of civil society, giving timber companies, charcoal producers and artisanal loggers a free hand to exploit forest resources as they wish.

Three entry points were identified for creating the necessary accountability arrangements:

1. Supporting community-level committees in denouncing harmful and illegal forest exploitation practices, as well as asking public authorities to become more answerable to these complaints. This support should come from the territorial consultative committee and provincial network established under SVBC.
2. Increasing transparency in forest tax collection and expenditure by the public sector. Timber companies have suggested that they record all tax, royalty and licence payments, and that these figures are then compared with those supplied by local authorities. Civil society organisations (CSOs) have supported this idea.
3. Strengthening monitoring of the social contract and the implementation of concession management plans by timber companies. Two accountability arrangements are possible here. One is to have civil society organisations ask government to account for effective monitoring of the contracts and their implementation; the other is for CSOs to seek a role as independent observers.

The potential of the platforms created by IUCN depends on three elements: their internal performance, the intervention strategies they adopt, and their design:

- The platforms only recently became operational, and must tackle various internal performance bottlenecks before they can contribute fully to the forest governance regime. These include a lack of representativeness; the weak capacity of some CSO members for effective participation; the weak capacity of government; and the dependence of all members on IUCN for various needs.
- The local platforms have contributed considerably to reducing conflict within local populations, and between them and timber companies. Both the local and the territorial platforms play important roles in disseminating information on forest issues and raising awareness of harmful forest practices. Creating vertical linkages between the platforms is an important strategy to develop further, as is continuing the dialogue between stakeholders in each platform. These two strategies are important both for strengthening forest governance and for designing social accountability relations.

- SVBC has engaged with timber companies who obtained concession titles after DRC's 2002 moratorium on the allocation, extension and renewal of these titles. Three of the four companies active in Bikoro lost their titles after a national review of concessions in 2008, including two companies participating in SVBC, Leyda and ITB.* The issue here is to what extent IUCN took the 2002 moratorium into account when SVBC began in 2005.
- DRC's 2006 Constitution foresees the creation of local governments at the sector level, under the supervision of the territorial administration. As decentralisation progresses from the province to autonomous sector governments, the territorial platform created by IUCN will have to be transformed into a sectoral platform when local elections are held at this lower level.

The DRC case study illustrates that good forest governance can be socially constructed by a multi-stakeholder process. It requires a systems perspective to deal with uncertainty and complexity, and it must take into account local norms, values and perceptions of good governance; the rules, regulations and structures necessary to legitimise action; and the effectiveness of those actions in improving forest governance.

The case study analysed the three potential *social accountability relations* identified against eight criteria of potential and quality drawn from the literature (such as the legitimate power of CSOs to sanction public sector performance; the degree of institutionalisation by government of decisions made in the territorial and provincial platforms; transparency; and the responsiveness of government to questions from CSOs and the private sector) and concluded that other criteria are also important. These include respect for human rights as a minimum condition for citizens and CSOs to denounce illegal forest exploitation practices; the existence of a legal and operational framework that is generally accepted and provides practical guidelines for law enforcement; the importance of not only designing social accountability relations at one administrative level but also ensuring linkages between different administrative levels; the design of accountability relations where local governments with an elected council, mandate and budget are in place; and the particular role and position of the private sector in accountability relations.

An ideal process of action learning for improved forest governance would require more than the two weeks of field work available for this study. It would allow enough time for all stakeholders to jointly assess, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate forest governance and accountability relations. Facilitating a dialogue across vertical linkages and in multi-stakeholder settings would contribute towards new perspectives on good forest governance, leading in turn to new ideas and strategies for improving governance.

Recommendations for IUCN

- *Strategic design*

  IUCN should review the role of the private sector in the strategic design of SVBC, and consider working with companies who have the legal right to operate in Bikoro territory. It should also revisit the appropriate administrative levels for multi-stakeholder dialogue and action, aligning them with levels that have a political, administrative and financial mandate for forest governance.

- *Promoting improved forest governance and social accountability relations*

  After identifying forest governance issues in Equator province, the next step is to reconvene stakeholders to agree on priority issues. This will help them to set their own *good-enough forest governance agendas for action*. Each agenda should include the design of sound social accountability relations responding to the issues and constraints identified in this study.

- *Implications for intervention strategies*

  Promoting improved forest governance arrangements and designing social accountability relations will require the platforms to reorient their strategies. IUCN's help will be needed to promote dialogue and communication between different stakeholders at each level, as well as between the different levels. This will mean more intensive facilitation of general assemblies at each level, as well as facilitating joint meetings for all three platforms. IUCN should continue its strategies of managing local conflict and disseminating information.

It should be recognised that the multi-stakeholder structures put in place have yet to mature, and that IUCN will organise training to address issues of organisational performance.

Recommendations for future action research by Wageningen International

An ideal process of action learning and research on forest governance and accountability arrangements would allow enough time for all stakeholders to:

1. Define good forest governance in their own context, including the accountability relations necessary to improve governance. Here context refers to different "locations" or intervention levels where forest governance decisions are made or forest resources exploited or traded. Good forest governance would be defined at each location, as it was done at the local, territorial and provincial levels in Equator province.
2. Define a strategic agenda for improving forest governance at each location.
3. Share these ideas among all locations or intervention levels, and agree on a joint action agenda, including the accountability relations that need to be established.
4. Implement the agenda at each level and ensure vertical linkages (bottom-up and top-down communication and alignment).
5. Bring all levels together to review progress in improving forest governance and (re)define the action agenda as necessary.
6. Continue this circle of action learning.

This process would involve more than a short field visit, and would include workshops at different locations and intervention levels, as well as exchanges allowing the dialogue to span those locations.

Important issues to take into consideration during such an action learning process are: treating forest governance both as a social construct and as a system, and identifying issues beyond the control or influence of those involved in the action-learning process.

Besides assessing existing and desirable accountability relations against a set of criteria, it would be interesting to know to what extent those relations represent a promising development strategy, and contribute to developing capacity, correcting market and state failures in natural resources management, and reducing poverty.

* After the 2008 review, IUCN ceased working with Leyda, but has remained engaged with ITB (which continues to operate with the special permission of the Ministry of Environment). IUCN has also invited the timber company SODEFOR, which retained its title, to participate in the platforms.

Résumé

La bonne gouvernance forestière est un sujet de plus en plus important pour les différentes parties prenantes dans de nombreux endroits du monde. Deux des initiatives internationales les plus connues pour améliorer la gouvernance forestière sont les processus ministériels FLEG (« Forest Law Enforcement and Governance ») soutenus par la Banque mondiale, et le plan d'action de l'Union européenne pour l'application des réglementations forestières, gouvernance et échanges commerciaux FLEGT (« Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade »).

Conçu pour soutenir et compléter ces initiatives, le projet SVBC de l'UICN (« Strengthening Voices for Better Choices ») pilote actuellement des régimes améliorés de gouvernance forestière dans six pays d'Afrique, d'Asie et d'Amérique du Sud. En République Démocratique du Congo (RDC), l'un des trois projets en Afrique, le SVBC a créé à cet effet des plateformes multiparticipatives aux niveaux local, territorial et provincial.

En 2008, Wageningen International a lancé un programme de recherche sur les « processus multiparticipatifs dans la gouvernance pour une gestion durable ». Ses objectifs comprennent le développement de nouvelles perspectives et méthodologies pour analyser et soutenir la gouvernance dans la gestion durable des ressources naturelles.

Wageningen International et l'UICN ont uni leurs forces dans le territoire de Bikoro de la Province de l'Equateur, en RDC, pour étudier quatre questions:

1. Qu'est-ce que la bonne gouvernance forestière selon les différentes parties prenantes impliquées à différents niveaux dans le projet SVBC?
2. Quels genres de régimes de reddition de comptes sont-ils nécessaires pour améliorer la gouvernance forestière?
3. Quels sont les potentiels que les structures mises en places par le SVBC doivent améliorer dans la gouvernance forestière, et en particulier en ce qui concerne la responsabilité?
4. Quelles sont les implications de l'analyse de la gouvernance forestière et de la responsabilité dans d'autres contextes, y compris les interventions et actions de recherches nécessaires pour les renforcer?

Ce rapport fourni quelques réponses à ces questions, ainsi que des recommandations pour l'approche de l'UICN et de toute autre action de recherche sur les régimes de responsabilité.

Réponses aux questions de la recherche

Le Cadre 1 décrit les principales préoccupations de la bonne gouvernance identifiées par les parties prenantes du projet SVBC.

Certains de ces sujets peuvent être traités par les plateformes crées avec le soutien de l'UICN, mais d'autres dépassent le cadre des compétences du projet. Cela inclut la décentralisation, les failles dans le cadre des réglementations, l'exclusion des agences de santé et d'éducation du contrat social (« cahier des charges »), la crise énergétique à Kinshasa (la capitale de la RDC), et un secteur judicaire défaillant qui affaiblit le respect des droits de l'homme.

Cadre 1 Les préoccupations des parties prenantes au sujet de la gouvernance forestière, dans la province de l'Equateur

Plateform	Sujets
Locale	► Etre capable de dénoncer des pratiques dommageables à des autorités publiques réactives ► Equité dans le partage des revenus de la forêt et des ressources parmi la population locale ► Conflits gérés localement sans l'intervention d'une cour provinciale
Territoriale	*Les sujets mentionnés ci–dessus, plus* ► Un cadre de régulation cohérent pour guider les interventions des parties prenantes dans le secteur forestier ► Une application adéquate de la loi ► Transparence en ce qui concerne la perception des impôts et les dépenses
Provinciale	► Equité dans le partage des revenus de la forêt et des ressources par la population locale ► Transparence en ce qui concerne la perception des impôts et les dépenses
Tous les niveaux	► Participation de la société civile aux processus de prise de décisions ► Acceptation de la loi forestière en tant qu'ensemble de règles devant être respectées par tous ► Décentralisation de la perception des impôts et des dépenses ► Information, éducation et communication (IEC)

L'étude a également révélé que les performances du secteur public dans le domaine de la gouvernance forestière sont faibles. C'est également le cas des performances de la société civile, qui laisse les mains libres aux sociétés d'exploitation forestière, aux producteurs de charbon et aux exploitants artisanaux pour exploiter les ressources de la forêt à leur guise.

Trois points d'entrée ont été identifiés pour créer les régimes de responsabilité nécessaires:

1. Soutenir les comités au niveau local pour dénoncer les pratiques d'exploitation forestière dommageables et illégales, et demander aux autorités publiques d'apporter plus de réponses à ces plaintes. Ce soutien devrait venir du comité consultatif territorial et du réseau provincial mis en place sous le SVBC.
2. Accroitre la transparence en ce qui concerne la perception des impôts forestiers et les dépenses du secteur public. Les sociétés d'exploitation du bois ont suggéré d'enregistrer tous les impôts, royalties et paiements de licences, et que ses chiffres soient ensuite comparés à ceux fournis par les autorités locales. Les organisations de la société civile (OSC) ont soutenu cette idée.
3. Renforcer le contrôle du contrat social entre les populations locales et les sociétés d'exploitation forestière, ainsi que l'application de la gestion des plans de concessions par les sociétés d'exploitation forestière. Deux régimes de responsabilité sont possibles ici. L'un d'eux est de faire en sorte que les organisations de la société civile demandent au gouvernement de se responsabiliser pour un contrôle effectif des contrats et de leur mise en œuvre; l'autre consiste à faire en sorte que les OSC cherchent à avoir un rôle d'observateurs indépendants.

Le potentiel des plateformes créées par l'UICN dépend de trois éléments: leur performance interne, les stratégies d'intervention qu'elles adoptent, et la manière dont elles sont conçues:

- Les plateformes ne sont devenues opérationnelles que récemment, et elles doivent faire face à de nombreux obstacles internes de performance avant de pouvoir contribuer pleinement au régime de gouvernance forestière. Ceci comprend un manque de représentativité, une faible capacité de certains membres des OSC à participer de manière efficace, la faible capacité du gouvernement, et la dépendance de tous les membres vis-à-vis de l'UICN pour régler de nombreux besoins.
- Les plateformes locales ont considérablement contribué à réduire les conflits au sein des populations locales, ainsi qu'entre elles et les sociétés d'exploitation forestière. Les plateformes locales aussi bien que les territoriales jouent des rôles importants dans la diffusion des informations sur les sujets touchant la forêt et pour la sensibilisation sur les pratiques forestières dommageables. La création de liens verticaux entre les plateformes est une stratégie importante à développer à l'avenir, car elle permet de poursuivre le dialogue entre les parties prenantes de chaque plateforme. Ces deux stratégies sont toutes deux importantes car elles renforcent la gouvernance forestière et la conception des relations de responsabilité sociale.
- Le SVBC s'est engagé avec des sociétés d'exploitation forestière qui ont obtenu des titres de concession après le moratoire de 2002 en RDC sur les allocations, extensions et renouvellement de ces titres. Trois des quatre sociétés actives à Bikoro ont perdu leurs titres après la révision nationale des concessions en 2008, y compris deux sociétés qui participaient au SVBC: Leyda et ITB.* Le problème ici est de savoir dans quelle mesure l'UICN a pris en compte le moratoire de 2002 quand le SVBC a commencé en 2005.
- La constitution de 2006 de la RDC prévoit la création de gouvernements locaux au niveau des secteurs, sous la supervision de l'administration territoriale. Alors que la décentralisation progresse de la province vers les gouvernements de secteurs, la plateforme créée par l'UICN devra être transformée en plateforme sectorielle quand les élections seront organisées à ce niveau inférieur.

L'étude de cas de la RDC illustre que la bonne gouvernance forestière peut être socialement construite par un processus multiparticipatif. Ceci doit faire appel à une perspective de systèmes pour faire face à l'incertitude et à la complexité, et doit prendre en considération les normes locales, les valeurs et les perceptions de la bonne gouvernance, ainsi que les règles, règlements et structures nécessaires pour légitimer cette action, et l'efficacité de ces actions pour améliorer la gouvernance forestière.

L'étude de cas a analysé les trois *relations de responsabilité sociale* potentielles identifiées parmi huit critères de potentiel et de qualité tirés de la documentation existante (comme le pouvoir légitime des OSC de sanctionner la performance du secteur social, la transparence, et la réactivité du gouvernement aux questions des OSC et du secteur privé), et conclut que d'autres critères sont également importants. Cela comprend le respect des droits de l'homme comme condition minimum pour les citoyens et les OSC afin de dénoncer les pratiques illégales d'exploitation forestière, l'existence d'un cadre juridique et opérationnel qui soit accepté par tous et qui offre des lignes directrices pratiques pour le respect des lois. L'important est de ne pas seulement concevoir des relations de responsabilité sociale à un niveau administratif mais également d'assurer des liens entre les différents niveaux administratifs, et de concevoir des relations de responsabilité là où des gouvernements locaux sont en place jouissant de conseils, mandats et budgets élus, et le rôle particulier et la position du secteur privé dans les relations de responsabilité.

Un processus idéal d'apprentissage actif pour une gouvernance forestière améliorée aurait également besoin de plus que les deux semaines de travail sur le terrain dont disposait cette étude. Cela permettrait de donner suffisamment de temps aux parties prenantes pour estimer, planifier, mettre en place, contrôler et évaluer conjointement la gouvernance forestière et les relations de responsabilité. Faciliter le dialogue au travers des liens verticaux et grâce aux processus multipartites contribuerait à avancer vers de nouvelles perspectives de bonne gouvernance, qui mèneraient à leur tour à de nouvelles idées et stratégies pour améliorer la gouvernance.

Recommandations pour l'UICN

- *Conception stratégique*

  L'UICN devrait revoir le rôle du secteur privé dans la conception stratégique du SVBC, et considérer la possibilité de travailler avec des sociétés qui ont l'autorisation légale d'opérer sur le territoire de Bikoro. L'UICN devrait également revoir les niveaux administratifs appropriés pour un dialogue et une action multipartite, en les alignant sur les niveaux qui ont un mandat politique, administratif et financier pour la gouvernance forestière.

- *Promouvoir des relations améliorées de gouvernance forestière et de responsabilité sociale*

  Après avoir identifié les sujets de gouvernance forestière dans la province de l'Équateur, la prochaine étape consiste à réunir à nouveau les parties prenantes pour les mettre d'accord sur les sujets prioritaires. Ceci les aidera à établir leurs propres plans d'action de suffisamment bonne gouvernance forestière. Chaque agenda devrait inclure la création de relations de responsabilité sociale solides qui répondent aux préoccupations et aux contraintes identifiées dans cette étude.

- *Implications pour des stratégies d'intervention*

  La promotion de régimes améliorés de gouvernance forestière et la création de relations de responsabilité sociale demanderont une réorientation des stratégies des plateformes. L'aide de l'UICN sera nécessaire pour promouvoir le dialogue et la communication entre les différentes parties prenantes à chaque niveau, ainsi qu'entre les différents niveaux. Ceci exigera de faciliter de manière plus intensive l'organisation d'assemblées générales à chaque niveau, ainsi que d'arranger des rencontres conjointes pour les trois plateformes. L'UICN devra continuer à appliquer ses stratégies de gestion de conflits locaux et de diffusion d'information.

Il faut noter que les structures multipartites mises en places ne sont pas encore arrivées à maturité, et que l'UICN devra organiser des formations pour traiter les problèmes relatifs à la performance organisationnelle.

* Après la révision de 2008, l'UICN a arrêté de travailler avec Leyda, mais a continué sa relation avec ITB (qui continue à opérer avec une permission spéciale du Ministère de l'Environnement). L'UICN a également invité la compagnie d'exploitation forestière SODEFOR, qui a gardé son titre de concession, à participer aux plateformes.

Recommandations pour des actions de recherche futures de la part de Wageningen International

Un processus idéal pour l'apprentissage actif et la recherche sur la gouvernance forestière et les régimes de responsabilité devrait donner suffisamment de temps à toutes les parties prenantes pour leur permettre de:

- Définir la bonne gouvernance dans leur propre contexte, y compris les relations de responsabilité nécessaires pour améliorer la gouvernance. Dans ce cadre, le contexte fait référence aux différentes « localisations » ou niveaux d'intervention où les décisions de gouvernance forestière sont prises ou les ressources forestières exploitées ou commercialisées. La bonne gouvernance forestière devrait être définie dans chaque localisation, tout comme cela a été fait aux niveaux local, territorial et provincial dans la province de l'Equateur.
- Définir un agenda stratégique pour améliorer la gouvernance forestière dans chaque localisation.
- Partager ces idées avec tous les localisations ou niveaux d'intervention, et se mettre d'accord sur un plan d'action commun, y compris sur les relations de responsabilité qui ont besoin d'être mises en place.
- Appliquer le plan d'actiona à tous les niveaux et s'assurer des liens verticaux (communication et alignement du bas vers le haut et du haut vers le bas).
- Réunir tous les niveaux pour faire une révision des avancements réalisés dans l'amélioration de la gouvernance forestière et (re)définir les plans d'action quand c'est nécessaire.
- Poursuivre le cercle d'apprentissage actif.

Ce processus devra comprendre plus qu'une brève visite sur le terrain, et devra inclure des ateliers dans les différentes localisations et niveaux d'intervention, ainsi que des échanges permettant jeter un pont entre ces différentes localisations.

Des points importants à prendre en considération pendant un tel processus d'apprentissage actif sont: traiter la gouvernance forestière et la construction social comme un système unique, et identifier les problèmes qui se situent au-delà du contrôle ou de l'influence de ceux qui sont impliqués dans le processus d'apprentissage actif.

Parallèlement à l'évaluation des relations de responsabilité existantes et souhaitables conformément à un ensemble de critères établis, il serait intéressant de connaître à quel point ces relations représentent une stratégie de développement prometteuse, et contribuent au développement des capacités, à corriger le marché et les failles de l'état en ce qui concerne la gestion des ressources naturelles, et à réduire la pauvreté.

Traditional chiefs © D. Klaver

1 Introduction

The research questions

Good forest governance is an increasingly important topic for stakeholders in many different settings around the world. Two of the best-known initiatives to improve forest governance are the regional Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) ministerial processes supported by the World Bank, and the European Union's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan.

Designed to support and complement such initiatives, the IUCN project "Strengthening Voices for Better Choices" (SVBC) is piloting improved forest governance arrangements in six countries in Africa, Asia and South America. The project is helping to establish multi-stakeholder processes in which government, civil society and the private sector jointly work towards better forest governance. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), one of three project countries in Africa, SVBC has created multi-stakeholder platforms at local, territorial and provincial levels for this purpose. These are being piloted in Bikoro territory of Equator province.

In 2008, Wageningen International (WI) launched a research programme on "Multi-stakeholder Processes in Governing for Sustainability". Its objectives are to: strengthen the learning capacities of its staff in applying social change methodologies and tools in field environments; develop capacity-strengthening materials which enable staff to intervene in complex and transitional societal processes; and develop new insights and methodologies for analysing and supporting governance in sustainable natural resource management.

WI and IUCN joined forces in Bikoro territory to study four questions:

- What is good forest governance according to the stakeholders involved at different levels in SVBC?
- What type of accountability arrangements are needed for improved forest governance?
- What potential do the structures established by SVBC have to improve forest governance and, in particular, accountability?
- What are the implications for analysing forest governance and accountability in other contexts, including interventions and the action research needed to strengthen them?

This report provides some answers to these questions, as well as recommendations for IUCN's approach and for further action research on accountability arrangements.

Methodology

Research principles and tools

The research was intended as a joint learning process involving IUCN's coordinators in both DRC and Brussels, as well as other local stakeholders. The aim was to document their perspectives on forest governance rather than the view of Wageningen International itself. The role of WI was that of research designer and facilitator.

The research adopted an action research methodology based on SVBC's bottom-up approach to addressing forest governance. Starting at the local (community) level, the project aims to create the dialogue and momentum necessary to bring about change at higher administrative levels.

The action research phase lasted two weeks, during which separate one-day workshops were held with the platforms operating at the community level – the Dialogue and Vigilance Committees (CDVs); the platform at the territorial level – the Consultative Committee for Forest Governance (CCGF); and the provincial platform – the Provincial Network for Good Forest Governance (REBOGOF). Besides these meetings, interviews were held with resource people representing different stakeholder groups (see Annexes).

The main facilitation methods used to help workshop participants jointly elaborate their future agenda were most significant change and elements of appreciative inquiry (see Box 1). The advantage of these methods is that they are based on monitoring or evaluating events using storytelling rather than preset indicators or closed questions. They also engage people in a joint learning process to celebrate and reinforce successes, rather than to try to overcome problems. So both tools fit well into an action research framework where the stakeholders involved will be collaborating in the future.

Box 1 Most Significant Change and Appreciative Inquiry

The most significant change (MSC) technique is a form of participatory monitoring and evaluation. It is participatory because it involves stakeholders both in deciding the types of change to be recorded and in analysing the data. It is a form of monitoring because it occurs throughout the programme cycle and provides information to help people manage the programme. It contributes to evaluation because it provides data on impact and outcomes that can be used to assess the performance of the programme as a whole.

In essence, MSC involves collecting significant change stories from the field, and systematically selecting the most instructive of these stories by panels of designated stakeholders or staff. These people are initially involved in "searching" for project impact. Once the changes have been captured, various people sit together, read aloud the stories and discuss in detail the value of the reported changes. When MSC is applied successfully, whole teams begin to focus their attention on impact (Davies & Dart 2005).

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a form of action research that attempts to create new theories, ideas and images to help the development of a system (Cooperrider & Whitney 1987). The key data innovation of AI is the collection of people's stories of something at its best. These are then discussed collectively to create new ideas or images that will facilitate developmental change in the group discussing them. AI is often applied in practice using the 4-D model:

- **Discover** – people discover the times when the organisation or system is at its best. These stories are told as richly as possible.
- **Dream** – the dream phase is where people are encouraged to envision the organisation or system at its best.
- **Design** – people identify strategies or ways of realising the dream.
- **Destiny** – the final phase is to implement the changes.

The research methodology in practice

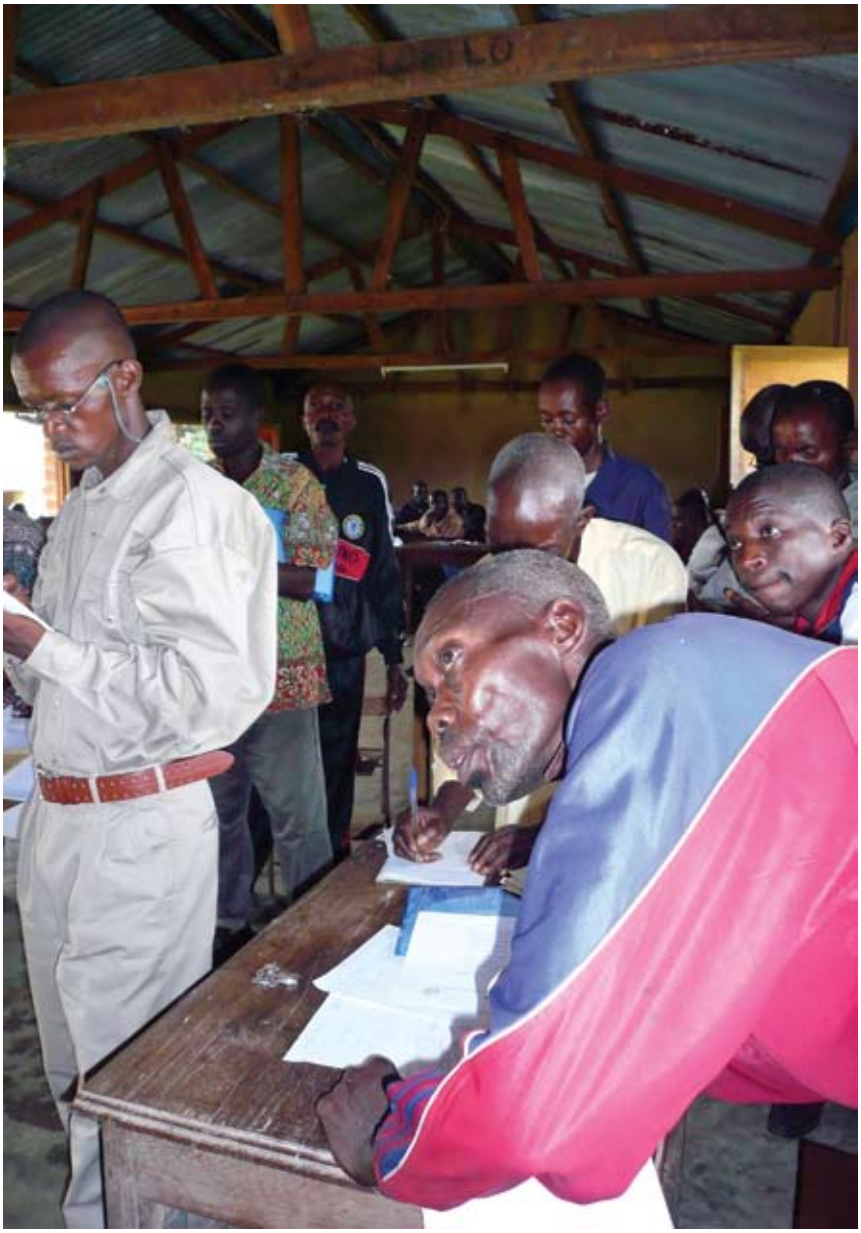
In practice, notwithstanding the joint learning approach, nearly all of the information obtained in the field was collected and analysed by WI. The IUCN coordinator in Brussels could not join the field work, and the project coordinator in DRC spent much of his time in the field working on logistical and administrative issues. As a result this report mostly reflects the conclusions of WI.

The bottom-up approach was implemented as planned. The field work started with a workshop with CDVs, who later joined the territorial workshop as members of the CCGF. Representatives from both the CDVs and the CCGF joined the provincial workshop.

The MSC and AI approaches were followed as far as possible, but field realities meant they were not used to the same extent in each workshop. The workshop programmes as followed in the field are given in the Annexes.

In the first workshop, the MSC and AI approaches proved helpful in gaining an overall picture of governance and accountability. But using the same tools in the territorial workshop would have generated similar information, because half of the participants were CDV members. Similarly, a third of the participants in the provincial workshop had attended the previous workshops.

Different methodologies were used to strengthen vertical linkages between the three levels, because the CDVs, the CCGF and the provincial network had not met together before. The workshops also made it possible to probe the results of earlier meetings, though in most cases the time available for collecting information was limited to no more than six hours.



CDV workshop © D. Klaver

The research methodology generated much information on the first research question, but was less successful in assessing the accountability arrangements needed for better forest governance. For one thing, accountability is a difficult concept to address directly in a short workshop. Also, the governance platforms have only just started functioning and are still gaining experience in this field. However, accountability was directly addressed by a subgroup in the provincial workshop, as well as in the territorial workshop.

The potential of the structures created by SVBC for improving forest governance and accountability was partially discussed in the workshops, in terms of formulating dreams and recommendations for governance. Other information was drawn from semi-structured interviews with key informants. These informants also provided ideas and information on forest law, rules, regulations and practices; the forest governance context; the performance of the project platforms; and the options for improving forest governance.

Structure of the report

This report is organised as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides an overview of the main forest governance issues in DRC, and in Bikoro in particular. The SVBC project is discussed against this background – its achievements and its potential for adding value to efforts to improve forest governance and strengthen social accountability relations. The second part of the chapter provides the basic elements for answering the third research question, namely the potential of the structures put in place by IUCN to improve forest governance and, in particular, accountability.
- Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the first and second research questions, beginning with a short overview of the relevant literature, followed by a presentation and discussion of the research findings and their implications. The chapters conclude with a detailed answer to each question.
- Chapter 5 reflects upon forest governance, accountability and the action research methodology used in the study, drawing lessons for future case studies.
- Chapter 6 concludes the report by recapitulating the answers to the research questions and providing recommendations for IUCN's approach and for future action research.

2 Forest governance and SVBC – the context

This chapter discusses the forest governance context in DRC and how IUCN is intervening in it. Important issues are the 2002 forest law and the status of concessions, the livelihood strategies of Bikoro's inhabitants, and the political decentralisation process that began in 2006. IUCN is intervening through the creation of multi-stakeholder platforms at local, territorial and provincial levels.

Forest concessions and the forest law

DRC's 2002 forest law states that all forests belong to the state and can be classified into forest reserves, protected forests and production forests (Government of DRC 2002). Timber companies obtain concession rights from the Environment Ministry as embodied in a concession contract. These comprise a concession management plan and a social contract (*cahier des charges*) specifying the compensation to be paid to the local population who, by traditional law, claim ownership of the land and forest. The social contract also covers development of socio-economic infrastructure, such as road construction and maintenance; improvement of schools, health centres and their equipment; and other land and water transport facilities.

Although the law states that the concession management plan and social contract are part of the concession contract, an implementing decree is currently lacking that clearly describes the rights and obligations of the timber company, government and the local population. In practice, timber companies are negotiating social contracts directly with the local population, without any government intervention.

Timber companies pay royalties on the size of their concession, logging taxes, export taxes, and deforestation and reforestation taxes. Despite the 2006 Constitution, which stipulates that taxes are to be collected by decentralised autonomous local governments (Government of DRC 2006), all forest-related taxes are paid directly to the national Treasury. Local authorities are entitled to retain 15% of these taxes and provincial governments 25%. These revenues are earmarked for basic social infrastructure. As yet, however, no funds have been transferred to provincial or local governments because they still lack the necessary legal authority and rights.

In 2002, the government declared a moratorium on the allocation, extension or renewal of forest concession titles. This was renewed in 2005. In 2008 a national commission reviewed all existing concession titles, officially recognising 46 of 156 titles (Government of DRC 2008).

In Bikoro, four timber companies holding five concession titles are currently active on 733,164 hectares (ha), roughly 53% of the territory's area (see Maps 1 and 2 opposite).[1] All of the companies in Bikoro obtained their concession titles after the 2002 moratorium. The 2008 commission legalised the title of only one company in Bikoro, SODEFOR. It did not reconfirm the titles of ITB or Leyda, who were participating in SVBC, leading IUCN to cease working with Leyda. Because ITB continued operating with the special permission of the Environment Ministry, IUCN decided to remain engaged with the company.

ITB entered the area in 2005 and has made most progress in negotiating social contracts with local communities. While doing so it has built a loading beach on Lake Tumba and started logging. The other companies are still preparing their concession management plans and have yet to start negotiating social contracts.

Population and forest issues

Bikoro had an estimated population of 245,000 in 2004, at a density of 17.7 people/km^2. Both Bikoro and the capital of Equator province, Mbandaka (700,000 inhabitants), have small markets and limited economic activity. Households cultivate their own food crops (cassava) using mainly slash-and-burn practices, and depend entirely on forest products for three months every year. On the Mbandaka–Bikoro axis, IUCN's zone of intervention, the average household income is an estimated US$70/year (ICC 2004). This means that Bikoro's population depends heavily on subsistence agriculture and forest resources.

Traditionally local communities consider themselves the owners of the land, and each family or clan (or both) has its own land. Slash-and-burn cultivation causes many land disputes amongst families and clans because land boundaries are not always clear.

Timber companies obtain forest concession rights on these same lands and negotiate a social contract directly with their inhabitants. Part of the social contract deals with social infrastructure and part is direct compensation, i.e. a stumpage fee, to the clan or family who claims traditional land ownership.

In the prevailing conditions a family or clan does not identify itself as belonging to a community or a village. Each clan is more interested in obtaining its own share of resources rather than working towards the creation of social infrastructure servicing more than one clan. On occasion traditional chiefs have even dismantled existing infrastructure and used the parts for their own benefit.[2]

Organizations such as Greenpeace have claimed that timber companies take advantage of this situation and that, "in exchange for extracting wood worth many hundreds of thousands of dollars, companies may give communities gifts worth as little as $100 in total. Once logging starts, the provision of services negotiated for by the community, such as school buildings, is often either derisory or not delivered at all" (Greenpeace 2007).

The negotiations between traditional chiefs and the timber companies can cause many conflicts. Until now government has not been involved in the social contracting process, even though it is responsible for staffing schools and health centres.[3]

[1] SODEFOR obtained a title in 2003 for 86,000 ha; ITB obtained titles in 2004 and 2005 for 294,700 ha in two concessions, including a part in Igende territory; Leyda obtained a title in 2005 for 123,000 ha; and Scibois a title for 229,400 ha, including a part in Lukolela territory, in 2003.

[2] Source: interviews with informants.

[3] Twenty-five social contracts have been signed by local representatives and timber companies (information from IUCN).

Map 1 Land cover map of DRC, based on the Vegetation Map of Africa prepared under the Global Land Cover 2000 Project (*http://bioval.jrc.ec.europa.eu/products/glc2000/glc2000.php*).

LEGEND

- International boundary
- Provincial boundary
- River
- National capital
- Provincial capital
- Closed evergreen lowland forest
- Submontane forest (900–1500 m)
- Montane forest (>1500 m)
- Swamp forest
- Mosaic of forest and croplands
- Mosaic of forest and savannah
- Closed deciduous forest
- Deciduous woodland
- Deciduous shrubland with sparse trees
- Open deciduous shrubland
- Closed grassland
- Open grassland with sparse shrubs
- Sparse grassland
- Swamp bushland and grassland
- Croplands (>50%)
- Waterbodies
- Settlements

0 400 Km

Map 2 Equator province, DRC. The province's boundary follows the new political subdivisions introduced by the country's 2006 Constitution.

Other governance issues to emerge from the workshop with the CDVs include:

- Since 2007 an increasing amount of timber has been harvested illegally to produce charcoal for sale in Kinshasa. A charcoal supply chain has emerged, controlled by influential stakeholders from Bikoro town, Mbandaka and Kinshasa. The timber is cut and processed by poor people with no other sources of income. Charcoal production increased at the same time as the transport network was extended to include ITB's loading beach in Bikoro and a road between Mbandaka and Bikoro. The CDVs observe that producing charcoal is the most damaging forest use. Appropriate decrees to control production have yet to be issued and local people lack the power to tackle this issue by themselves.
- Artisanal logging is also seen as damaging to forests, though it has not spread as widely as charcoal production. Artisanal loggers produce timber mainly for local consumption.
- Trees (like the giant sapelli, *Entandrophragma cylindricum*) that support caterpillars and other non-timber products important for local livelihoods are being cut by timber companies, charcoal producers and artisanal loggers. These caterpillars are an important source of protein for the local population for at least three months every year when food crops are ripening.

Decentralisation and forest governance

DRC's 2006 Constitution envisions the creation of 26 provinces (including the city of Kinshasa), each with a parliament, plus the creation of local governments at the level of the town, commune (in urban areas), sector and traditional chiefdoms (rural areas), each with an elected council. These changes imply that local governments will have the mandate and financial responsibility to manage local development and resources. The provinces started functioning as autonomous entities in August 2008, but local governments have yet to be created at the sector level.

The author expects that local governments will be created in each of Bikoro's three sectors, and that the territorial administration will continue to work as a deconcentrated entity. This means that it will represent central government in certain functions without having the status of a local government.

The most important effects of decentralisation on forest management and planning are:

- Provinces will be responsible for administering 40% of the tax revenues currently collected by the Treasury. They will also have a budget for forest management. In future, local governments under the province will be able to claim 15% of tax revenues (with 25% going to the province and the remaining 60% to central government).
- As at the national level, a consultative committee representing both the private and public sectors will be created at the provincial level. It will take the lead in drafting a provincial forest management plan.
- Both provincial and local governments will have the mandate, organization and operating procedures to formulate both strategic and annual development plans and budgets.
- Specific responsibilities devolved to local governments and relevant to the forest sector include law enforcement, maintaining social infrastructure, and issuing permits and licences.
- Specific responsibilities devolved to the province and relevant to the forest sector are provincial forest programmes and their implementation in line with the national forest law. They also include enforcing laws, drafting provincial implementing decrees, and issuing permits and licences.

Table 2 outlines the expected situation after decentralisation in Equator province, including the allocation of responsibilities and mandates under the forest law. The table also locates the structures created under SVBC (CDVs, CCGF and provincial network) within this framework.

Table 2 Future decentralised entities, their responsibilities under the forest law, and the equivalent SVBC multi-stakeholder platforms

	Future status under decentralisation	Status under forest law	SVBC project structure
Community/local	Inhabitants or citizens of local government jurisdictions at the sector level	Negotiate social contracts with timber companies (schools, health centres, roads and compensation for clan representatives). The law is not clear about which parties should be involved in negotiating social contracts.	Dialogue and Vigilance Committees (CDVs)
Sector (Three in Bikoro territory. Not yet created.)	Local government with autonomous status, devolved power and responsibilities, a local council elected by the population, and its own budget	Not mentioned in the forest law, but will play a key role in implementing and monitoring social contracts with timber companies because it will be responsible for social infrastructure. Also responsible for developing and implementing local development plans. The decentralization law stipulates that sector governments should collect all taxes, retaining 15% of the revenues for constructing and maintaining social infrastructure. The rest is to be transferred to the province (25%) and the centre (60%).	New structure to be created
Territory	It is assumed that this will become a deconcentrated administrative entity	None. Neither the Constitution nor the forest law clarify the nature of the territory or its functions. As a deconcentrated entity it will only implement orders from national or provincial levels and will not have any political decision-making authority.	Consultative Committee (CCGF)
Province (Officially operational since August 2008.)	Provincial government with a parliament. Autonomous status, devolved power and responsibilities, and its own budget since August 2008.	Responsible for drafting provincial laws and implementing decrees, and implementing provincial development plans, including a provincial forest management plan. Also responsible for land registration. A provincial consultative committee will be set up to advise on forest issues, including forest classification	Provincial network (REBOGOF)
Centre	National government	Responsible for drafting national forest law and implementing decrees; a national forest management plan; land registration; and tender procedures and concession contracts. A national consultative committee will provide advice as needed.	Not yet in place

Strengthening Voices for Better Choices (SVBC)

Objectives and interventions

SVBC aims to identify and promote improved forest governance arrangements in partnership with government, civil society and the private sector. The project began in 2005 and will finish in July 2009. It is working towards five main outcomes:

1. Legal, institutional and economic obstacles to sustainable and equitable forest management identified in six priority countries.
2. New and innovative approaches to overcoming the obstacles to good forest governance pilot tested and assessed.
3. Selected representatives from government, civil society and the private sector have enhanced skills and knowledge for participating more effectively in the development and implementation of forest governance reforms.
4. Awareness of, and commitment to, FLEG processes and action increased and sustained.
5. Lessons learned are effectively captured, analysed and disseminated at local, national, regional and global levels.

One of the strategies followed by the SVBC project has been to support the creation of multi-stakeholder platforms at community, territorial and provincial levels. The following sections briefly describe these platforms in relation to their objectives.

Community level

At the community[1] level in Bikoro, SVBC has supported the establishment and functioning of 32 Committees for Dialogue and Vigilance (CDVs). These have three main objectives:

1. To identify and denounce actions harmful to forest conservation and development.
2. To build mutually beneficial and harmonious relations between timber companies and surrounding communities.
3. To draw up local development plans and monitor and evaluate their implementation.[2]

Besides these objectives, the CDVs solve conflicts of interest between community members and promote alternative livelihood strategies that are less harmful to forest resources.

CDV members include local customary chiefs, representatives of informal associations and marginalized groups such as women and pygmies, the local elite (from the church, school, health centre and opinion leaders) and clan representatives. Some CDVs incorporate one village; others incorporate several. Each CDV has at most 12–15 members and meets every week. The CDVs are not a tripartite stakeholder platform (i.e. one representing government, civil society and the private sector), since they represent mainly users and owners of forest resources, as well as those who will benefit from social contracts signed with timber companies. They represent the local population in its dealings with timber companies and government. To date the CDVs have been cooperating with the timber company ITB.

Territorial level

SVBC has supported the creation of a Consultative Committee for Forest Governance (CCGF), officially recognized by Equator province in 2007. The CCGF operates as an association, with a General Assembly that sets its strategic priorities and an executive committee in charge of implementing the strategy. The charter of the CCGF lists the following objectives (CCGF 2008):

- To engage the private sector (timber companies), public administration and civil society in a dialogue that includes joint analysis and resolution of forest governance issues.
- To disseminate the forest law and related implementing decrees concerning (illegal) logging and trade in timber and non-timber products.
- To raise awareness of the importance of paying taxes and respecting local authorities.
- To promote local values of good forest governance and their observance during forest exploitation activities.
- To promote mediation as a strategy for resolving conflicts.
- To stimulate local communities to take care of themselves and their own development (self-reliance).
- To monitor the implementation of forest concession management plans.

The CCGF has held one General Assembly since its creation.

The members of the CCGF include all CDVs well as the territorial administrator, timber companies and CSOs operating at the territorial level (including churches and organisations representing women and pygmies).

Provincial level

In May 2008, Equator province officially recognized the Provincial Network for Good Forest Governance (REBOGOF). Like the CCGF, the provincial network aims to bring the public, private and civil sectors together in a dialogue on forest governance issues.

The first meeting of the network coincided with WI's field visit in June 2008. It has yet to develop a strategic plan.[3]

Achievements and added value of the platforms in forest governance

Achievements in relation to objectives

By July 2008, 14 of the 32 CDVs had been active for 18 months. In line with their objectives, they have been contributing to mutually beneficial and harmonious relations between timber companies and local communities. Their objective of denouncing harmful actions needs more work and support, however. The CCGF and the provincial network need to provide the necessary support to CDVs in terms of discussing the nature of harmful practices and their illegality, and asking public officials to take action. Making public authorities more responsive to citizens also requires stronger vertical linkages between the different platforms.

The third objective assigned to the CDVs is unrealistic in the current circumstances, because no development plans are being prepared at the community level or by local authorities. The role of CDVs in this area may grow over the next few years as local governments are established.

The main achievement of the CCGF is that it has succeeded in involving timber companies, government and civil society in a dialogue that goes beyond information exchange. But the CCGF is still in its formative stages. One General Assembly has been held to decide on its strategic priorities, namely constructing an

[1] The "community" is not well-defined. It may comprise one or more villages, and its relation to the sector is unclear.

[2] Information provided by IUCN. Note that these objectives differ from those assigned to the CDVs in the charter of the CCGF.

[3] Neither the charter nor the membership of the provincial network has been finalised.

environmental information centre and radio station, raising environmental awareness and promoting alternative livelihoods. These do not seem to reflect the objectives originally assigned to the CCGF under its charter (see above).

The territorial workshop in Bikoro revealed that the key roles of the CCGF are to:

- Provide a platform for exchanging information and opinions about the rights and obligations of public servants when sanctioning people who have broken the law.
- Jointly explore different articles of the forest law and their implications for charcoal production and artisanal logging.

With considerable support from IUCN, the CCGF has succeeded in obtaining part of the loading beach rents paid by ITB to the territorial authority. With this money, the CCGF is building an environmental radio station. ITB has also promised to contribute to the station's operating and maintenance costs.[1]

The provincial network met for the first time during WI's field visit, and has yet to develop its strategic plan. So it is not possible to assess its added value for governance.

Key intervention strategies with future potential

The following strategies create considerable added value in strengthening forest governance and accountability:

- **Conflict management at the local level**. The CDVs and the CCGF have highlighted the positive effects of managing conflict at the community level, including strengthening the self-reliance of local populations and reducing their dependence on the provincial court of justice. This strategy is one of the successes of the SVBC project and should be continued.
- **Disseminate information on laws and regulations related to forest governance**. At all levels, workshop participants agreed that disseminating the forest law and related regulations, and educating citizens about their rights and obligations, remain necessary, despite the efforts of various organisations over the past few years (which appear to have left few tangible traces[2]). This strategy has also proved successful and should be continued. The environmental radio will make an invaluable contribution to its implementation.
- **Strengthening the linkages between the CDVs, the CCGF and the provincial network**. Creating vertical linkages between these platforms, as SVBC has recently started to do, is an important strategy. It will enable CDVs, for example, to articulate their concerns at higher governance levels, and will also allow provincial network members to learn about forest governance issues requiring attention at the provincial level. At present, vertical linkages are weak or non-existent. The provincial workshop revealed that CSOs in Mbandaka are unaware of the day-to-day governance issues faced by local communities. It also revealed potentially conflicting interests between the CDVs who want to halt charcoal production and CSOs in Mbandaka whose constituencies need charcoal to cook.
- **Dialogue for forest governance and accountability at each level**. Each platform can collectively analyse forest governance issues and identify mutually acceptable solutions. Dialogue entails not only exchanging different viewpoints and stakes, but also jointly designing informal rules and regulations, including accountability relations, binding on all stakeholders. With a great deal of support from IUCN, the CCGF has engaged in this dialogue and succeeded in obtaining some of the rents paid by ITB. These processes still require substantial support from IUCN.

Bottlenecks in internal performance

Various internal issues hamper the realisation of each platform's objectives, as well as the effectiveness of SVBC's intervention strategies. The following need careful consideration.

- The representativeness of the CDVs, the CCGF and the provincial network. This concerns the capacity of the CDV to talk on behalf of an entire community with the public and private sectors, the capacity of CCGF members to represent the interests of their organisations, as well as the capacity of CSOs working at the provincial level to represent the interests of their members at the territorial or community level. Up to a third of the 32 CDVs reportedly do not meet with all local stakeholders. Some CDVs deliberately represent only some clans to the detriment of others, and do not always take into account the interests of groups such as women and pygmies. At the CCGF level the capacity of special interest groups such as women and pygmies to defend their interests in forest governance is weak.[3] The first meeting of the provincial network also showed that its CSO members are not (yet) able to talk as representatives of their organisations, and that provincial CSOs are unaware of day-to-day local forest governance issues.
- The public sector also has limited capacity to fulfil its responsibilities and duties.
- All structures need IUCN's support to obtain objective information about forest rules and regulations. This information, and the correct interpretation of existing rules and regulations, depend on informants from Kinshasa. The workshops clearly revealed that many organisations and stakeholders have differing information on forest governance issues, and that either this information is not being confirmed by written statements, or that written information is being interpreted differently.
- IUCN's moral support is still needed by CDVs who want to denounce undesirable practices. It was also needed to direct part of the loading beach rents collected by the territory towards the environmental radio station.
- The day-to-day management of the CCGF requires IUCN's support to mobilise the executive committee to work towards its strategic priorities.
- A dependence on meeting allowances for the CDVs, the CCGF's General Assembly and the provincial network. There are clear indications that the allowances paid by IUCN for weekly CDV meetings are contributing to the exclusion of some members in favour of family or clan members.

Important cultural or local conventions that could undermine the performance of the platforms are the incentives for cooperation and the difficulty of disseminating information.

- The incentives to work together in a multi-stakeholder process are weaker than the incentives for uncooperative behaviour that

[1] Though ITB failed to obtain a new concession title after the 2008 review (see discussion above).

[2] The workshops held in Bikoro and Mbandaka clearly showed that people are unable to relate any of the forest governance issues they face daily to the provisions of the forest law. The law has been disseminated by the World Resources Institute (WRI) but only some CSOs are aware of its contents.

[3] Interview with representatives of pygmy and women's organisations at the territorial level.

Village meeting, Bokongo, Bikoro © J. Kiyulu

privileges one's own family or clan (roadblocks, demonstrations, corruption). Collaboration among CSOs is also rare or non-existent. Equator province's network of NGOs broke up after conflicts over issues such as representation in the Sun City peace process. Also the relations between the provincial and territorial platforms set up by the World Resources Institute (WRI) to combat corruption are weak.

- Disseminating information in DRC is a major obstacle. Despite many IEC interventions at all levels on the forest law and related rules and regulations, the study informants and workshop participants uniformly emphasised the need to further disseminate the do's and don'ts of forest laws. This dissemination failure can be explained by a local tradition of keeping information to oneself for personal advantage.[1] This undermines every IEC activity by preventing information from trickling down. A second tradition is that people expect allowances for attending meetings. Convening local meetings without allowances then becomes difficult. One way of improving information dissemination may be to make traditional leaders responsible for organising meetings.[2] Another may be to link directly the information disseminated to day-to-day issues faced by local people.[3]

Conclusions

Both DRC's 2002 forest law and the political decentralisation policy launched in 2006 have yet to be fully implemented. All royalties and taxes are still being channelled to the Treasury, rather than 40% of revenues staying with the provinces for local spending.

The rules and regulations already in place do not yet provide a framework for addressing local forest governance issues. Clear guidelines on the social contract are lacking, in particular an implementing decree on the rights and obligations of the parties to the contract. In the absence of any guidance, timber companies are negotiating social contracts directly with local populations, without government intervening to ensure they are fair and legal. Also lacking are rules and regulations to control the charcoal trade and artisanal logging, as requested by the CDVs who represent the interests of local communities.

All four of the timber companies operating in Bikoro obtained their concession titles after the moratorium of 2002, and the 2008 national commission on concessions legalised the title of only one of these companies. None of the other companies had their titles reconfirmed, including the two companies who had participated in SVBC up to that point. Of these two, IUCN ceased working with Leyda after the 2008 decision, but has continued working with ITB because the company has special permission from the Environment Ministry to continue its operations. The issue here is to what extent IUCN took the 2002 moratorium into account when SVBC began in 2005.

A second issue is the positioning of the CDV, the CCGF and the provincial platform with respect to decentralisation. As the locus of decentralised rural government under the 2006 Constitution, the sector will play an important role in forest governance, especially in the monitoring of the social contract and in providing social infrastructure. The province will remain the key actor in land registration, coordination of forest policies, drafting implementing decrees and forest classification. The territory will probably become a deconcentrated entity that will only implement provincial or national rules and regulations without having any decision-making power. This implies that the CCGF will have to explore ways of establishing a multi-stakeholder dialogue on governance at the sector level after local elections.

SVBC's intervention strategy, i.e. setting up multi-stakeholder platforms at different levels to engage in managing conflict, disseminating information, creating vertical linkages and supporting dialogue for joint action, seems relevant and promising in a context where the existing rules and regulations provide only a weak framework for tackling forest governance. The platforms will contribute to locally defined rules, regulations and practices.

Positive results can already be seen in the fields of conflict management and information dissemination, whereas the creation of vertical linkages and multi-stakeholder dialogue have only just begun. If the project structures are to achieve their objectives, their organisational performance must be strengthened and vertical linkages created between each structure. The main issues to address are increasing each structure's capacity to represent its members effectively, strengthening the performance of member organisations, providing objective information on forest policies, rules and regulations, and reducing dependence on IUCN.

Two of the challenges facing IUCN are that the incentives to cooperate are weaker than those to pursue family or clan interests, and that serious institutional weaknesses hamper the dissemination of information.

[1] Sources: Chair, Executive Committee, CCGF; IUCN; Digital Congo TV.
[2] IUCN is currently experimenting with this.
[3] Based on the workshops with the CCGF and provincial network.

3 Defining forest governance

This chapter explores forest governance in Equator province, in particular how it is defined by SVBC's stakeholders. It is based on ideas and responses obtained from workshops and interviews. This information has been compiled and clustered by WI, but the clustering has yet to be communicated to all stakeholders.

On some occasions during the study, the research question was formulated as: What has been the most significant change in forest governance in the preceding period? This allowed the author to explore IUCN's contribution to forest governance (see discussion of CDV workshop below). On other occasions, the question was put as: What does good forest governance mean to you? or governance principles were inferred from group work on the governance of forest uses such as charcoal production and artisanal logging.

The next three sections respectively explore governance concepts and policy principles; discuss how stakeholders define forest governance; and briefly assesses these findings against the conceptual background and activities of SVBC.

Good forest governance

Exploring concepts and principles

There are many definitions of governance – and forest governance – and many researchers, policy makers and practitioners working on this concept (Bodegom, Klaver, Schoubroeck & Valk 2008). Many are value-laden, reflecting the norms and judgements of stakeholders in specific cultural settings.

Bavinck, Chuenpagdee, Diallo, Heijden, Kooiman, Mahon & Williams (2005) explore governance in the context of fisheries management, proposing the following definition:

> *Governance is the whole of public as well as private interactions that are initiated to solve societal problems and create societal opportunities. It includes the formulation and application of principles guiding those interactions and care for institutions that enable them*.

This definition emphasizes the altered role of the state, the private sector and civil society in governance. Rather than governments being in the driving seat, new governance thinking recognises the importance of co-steering with civil society and business. Important aspects of this new governance concept include (Bavinck *et al*. 2005; Kuindersma, Boonstra, Boer, Gerritsen, Pleijte & Selnes 2006; Bodegom *et al*. 2008):

- A recognition and growing consensus that governance is a multi-stakeholder responsibility and process, operating at different policy and administrative levels, and embracing stakeholder diversity in interests, perceptions and ambitions.
- A recognition that solutions and means are needed to cope with uncertainty and complexity. In process terms, this means that societal change through "learning to adapt" plays an important role in improving governance.
- An acknowledgement of the importance of day-to-day management of strategic issues in society, but also an emphasis on creating and maintaining the institutions or arrangements needed for this management. The new governance concept also explicitly addresses the norms, values and principles shaping those institutions. So any assessment of governance would look at the effectiveness of solutions, the legitimacy of the institutions established to manage society, and the moral principles guiding the acceptability or unacceptability of those institutions. A fourth criterion of assessment would look at the coherence between these three "orders".

Influential political and development organisations have identified various principles of governance, many rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. These include:

- Voice and accountability (WB), including stakeholder participation (UNDP).
- Political stability and absence of violence (WB).
- Government effectiveness (WB). This measures the competence of the bureaucracy and the quality of public service delivery. It also covers efficiency, i.e. the extent to which limited human, financial and natural resources are allocated without unnecessary waste, delay or corruption (UNDP).
- Regulatory quality (WB). This refers to the incidence of market-unfriendly policies.
- Rule of law (WB). This refers to the quality of contract enforcement, the performance of the police and courts (including the independence of the judiciary), and the incidence of crime. It also covers fairness (the degree to which rules are applied equally in society) and decency (the degree to which the formulation and stewardship of those rules avoid humiliating or harming people) (UNDP).
- Control of corruption (WB).
- Transparency, i.e. the degree of clarity and openness in decision making (UNDP).
- Policy coherence (EU).

Though generally accepted by many countries and groups, these principles are ambitious and sometimes contested in different cultural settings. Grindle (2004) criticises the "good governance" agenda as unrealistic, overly demanding and lacking in guidance on setting priorities. She suggests an alternative "good-enough" governance agenda which treats governance as a learning process sensitive to existing capabilities and contexts.

Recognising that cultural values in developing countries often differ from those in Western or developed countries, Jabeen (2007) argues that governance should be "indiginalised" and embedded in its cultural context.

Based on these observations, Bodegom & Klaver (2007) asked the Central African Forest Commission's (COMIFAC) task force on AFLEG–FLEGT to formulate its own principles of good governance (see Box 2). Comparing these with the principles of WB and UNDP reveals many similarities. The differences include the decentralisation of forest management and respect for the rights and traditions of local and indigenous people as particular aspects of forest governance in Central Africa. The principle of regulatory quality identified by the WB is absent.

Box 2 Forest governance according to the AFLEG–FLEGT task force of COMIFAC

- Being accountable at all levels
- Transparency and legitimacy towards one's constituencies
- Equity and equitable sharing of forest revenues and costs
- Respect for all stakeholders and promotion of the public interest
- Justice, sanctions and fighting corruption
- Information, education and communication
- Decentralisation of forest management and decision making
- Respect for the rights and traditions of local and indigenous people
- Law enforcement and other rules and regulations, improving forest monitoring and control systems

Source: Bodegom & Klaver (2007)

Consequences for the study

In line with the foregoing discussion, the study of forest governance in Bikoro territory and Equator province aimed to define a "good enough" governance agenda based on local norms and values. Rather than introducing governance principles found in the literature, stakeholders were asked for their own ideas about governance. Where possible the author tried to obtain detailed information about the three elements or "orders" of governance elaborated above. For example, the provincial workshop started with the question, What forest management principles are necessary for improved forest governance?

Good forest governance in Equator province

This section presents the forest governance issues identified by local communities in the CDV workshop, and by stakeholders at the territorial and provincial levels. The author has clustered the findings into the following common themes:

- Being able to denounce harmful practices to responsive public authorities. This is particularly relevant to the production and trade of charcoal. It was also identified as an important principle in the monitoring of timber companies.
- Equity in sharing forest revenues and resources with local populations. This is about respecting the forest-dependent livelihoods of local people, by promoting alternative livelihoods, sharing the income generated by timber companies equally, using taxes revenues to reduce poverty, classifying forests (which can have an impact on access to forest resources), and ensuring forest concession tender procedures do not favour large timber companies over smaller organisations such as community associations.
- Being able to manage conflicts locally through mediation, without any intervention by the provincial court. This is particularly important for managing conflicts over the social contract and land disputes between clans.
- Civil society participation in decision making was often mentioned but not elaborated in detail. Some stakeholders want a say in the award of concession rights; others also want a say in which species can be commercially exploited.
- Acceptance of the forest law as a binding set of rules. The legitimacy of the law has been questioned by both public authorities and civil society. Forest governance will be constrained if these stakeholders refuse to recognise the law. On the other hand, space is needed to amend certain articles of the law.
- A regulatory framework that guides forest exploitation. The existing rules and regulations, i.e. the forest law and implementing decrees, do not yet provide the necessary framework for improving forest governance. Examples are the lack of regulation of social contract negotiations and charcoal production.
- Adequate law enforcement. The rules and regulations for classifying forests, checking licenses and collecting taxes are currently unenforced. The main reasons are that the forest departments at territorial and provincial levels are not yet operational, and that the police at the sector level are unaware of their role in forest law enforcement. The rent-seeking behaviour and poor task performance of civil servants was openly discussed in every workshop.
- Transparency in tax collection and expenditure. Various non-existent taxes are collected; tax payments are negotiated; and not all tax revenues flow to authorities at the territorial or provincial level.
- Decentralisation of tax collection and expenditure from the centre. The royalties and other taxes currently paid by timber companies to the Treasury are not being transferred to the province or lower administrative levels.
- Information, education and communication.

Forest governance issues at the community level.

Participants in the workshop for CDVs emphasised the ability to denounce harmful forest exploitation practices, fairness in sharing forest revenues and local conflict management as important governance issues.

The CDVs clearly intend to *denounce illegal practices*, but the CCGF charter (which defines their role) does not mention denunciation as an objective.[1] The CDVs also want IUCN to play a role in supporting any denunciations, but at the same time recognise that IUCN in Kinshasa is too far away to provide the necessary support. The CDVs fear the possible negative repercussions of denouncing undesirable practices. The charcoal production and trade system, for example, is run by powerful elites such as the territorial police officer and a timber company agent.[2] The key question here is what source of authority the CDVs can rely on when denouncing illegal practices.

A related issue is that stakeholders need to know what forest exploitation practices are considered illegal.[3] In the case of charcoal production and trade, the relevant rules and regulations are lacking. The only entry points for regulation are to discuss the issue in the platforms, and to jointly establish informal rules and regulations for controlling such practices.

The responsiveness and responsibility of local authorities and their commitment to ending harmful practices must also be considered. Denouncing undesirable or illegal actions makes little sense if public officials take no corresponding action.[4]

[1] According to their charter the CDVs play an important role in IEC activities, collecting forest exploitation data and mediation. But information provided by IUCN describes the different objectives listed in Chapter 2.
[2] Sources: Territorial administrator, CCGF, CDV Moheli.
[3] Sources: Provincial workshop, CCGF workshop, Kinshasa-based forest law expert.
[4] A representative of the local anti-corruption committees set up by WRI in 2005 reported that four police officers arrested by the territorial authorities on charges of corruption and sexual harassment were released after the province intervened. The anti-corruption committees have proved to be effective in reducing the number of arbitrary arrests, reducing the number of illegal taxes collected, resolving land disputes at the local level, and reducing corruption in schools.

The CDVs[1] want a *fair share* of forest revenues and resources through the promotion of rational forest use and through the social contracts negotiated with timber companies. They report a positive trend over the past 18 months in the rational use of forest resources by artisanal loggers,[2] but – owing to new loading facilities and increased timber transport by water – a harmful trend of increasing charcoal production for consumers in Kinshasa. No information is available on the rational use of forest resources by timber companies.

The most important significant change in forest management is the increased capacity of CDVs to *manage conflicts locally*. Being able to manage one's own conflicts, rather than having to rely on the courts, is seen as an important step towards improved governance. The country's juridical system is still ineffective and costly, and "a prevailing culture of impunity" seriously threatens respect for human rights (United Nations 2007). The CDVs and the CCGF report that the number of conflicts taken to court has declined considerably as a result of the awareness raising and information sessions organised by IUCN.

Forest governance principles at the territorial level

Besides the governance issues identified at the local level and validated in the CCGF workshop, other issues identified at the territorial level included regulatory gaps, law enforcement and transparency in tax collection and disbursement.

A legal framework is missing that would 1) regulate charcoal production and trade; 2) reduce the confusion over the official status of artisanal loggers; and 3) clarify the negotiation of social contracts while stakeholders await an official implementing decree. Some of these rules and regulations must be prepared at the national level (such as the implementing decree on the social contract and charcoal production and trade), and some at the provincial level (artisanal logging). Until now, however, Equator province has made no effort to establish the institutions, rules or regulations needed to improve forest governance.

As with the social contract, which is being negotiated in the absence of a implementing decree, the CDVs, CCGF and provincial network could make an effort to develop their own rules and regulations for artisanal logging and charcoal production and trade. This approach was discussed at the CCGF workshop, but participants concluded that the energy supply problem in Kinshasa had to be solved before charcoal production in Bikoro territory could be reduced, and moreover that powerful elites were controlling the supply chain. To what extent could locally defined rules and regulations regulate undesirable charcoal production and trade while these external factors went unresolved?

Many issues related to *law enforcement* were raised at the territorial workshop. These included forest classification (the responsibility of provincial authorities), the review of concession titles (carried out in Kinshasa), the supervision of the social contract and control of timber company licences (territorial level), and collection of legal taxes that are paid into the public treasury, especially at the level of the territory.[3]

Law enforcement requires a public sector with the necessary human and financial resources, and public officials who are aware of their duties and rights regarding forest law enforcement.[4] It also calls for a human resource management system that rewards good performance (results-based) by public servants and sanctions poor performance. Discussions in the CCGF and provincial workshops revealed the weak capacity and incentives of the public sector for playing their role in forest governance.

In response, the CDVs proposed that they engage in monitoring the implementation of forest concession management plans. One of the timber companies contested this suggestion after the workshop, claiming that local communities are incapable of monitoring the technical aspects of forest concession management. *The author, however, identifies this as a possible issue for IUCN to consider, given that no one is monitoring the timber companies. Civil society and the public sector could join forces in this task*.

The sub-group working on artisanal logging revealed that *tax collection and expenditure are not transparent*.[5] Public officials do not respect existing rules and regulations for collecting taxes or sanctioning violators. A concrete example given was that many tax payers are not given a receipt. Participants in the CCGF workshop suggested that all consumers or buyers of timber should first ask the producer to show official receipts of taxes paid.

Forest governance principles at the provincial level

At this level, the most important principles discussed were the equity principle and the need for increased transparency in tax collection and expenditure.

The *equity principle* was expressed in two different ways. First, civil society participants claimed that the social contract does not provide enough benefits for the local population. Second, they asked for a review of Article 83 of the forest law, which states that forest concessions are to be allocated by tender. This limits the opportunities for local communities to obtain concessions because they lack the means to compete with the larger timber companies.

With regard to *tax collection and use*, it became clear that timber companies must constantly show their licenses and permits to public officials from the province, territory and sector, even though this information is available from the territorial administration. It also became clear that the responsibilities of forest officials and the police at different administrative levels are poorly defined. Also, police are issuing fines for arbitrary offences without the necessary formal authority. A clear division of responsibilities in law enforcement and control is missing.[6]

Public officials were asked to improve their performance in collecting taxes and overseeing licenses. The timber companies also suggested that they keep records of the taxes they pay and compare these with the amounts declared by officials.

Forest governance principles important at all levels

All levels emphasised acceptance of the forest law as a binding set of rules and regulations, the need for civil society participation in decision making, and decentralisation of forest tax collection and expenditure from Kinshasa to the provinces. Also important are IEC activities addressing stakeholders at every level.

The idea of *the forest law as a binding set of rules* is not yet fully accepted. In the CCGF workshop, both the forest engineer and the territorial administrator of Bikoro questioned the status of the forest law. They argued that the law has not yet been officially approved,

[1] Sources: CDV and CCGF workshops, field observations.
[2] Artisanal loggers are being encouraged to process trees immediately after felling them, rather than felling many trees at the same time and leaving them in the forest. This is to protect trees that host edible caterpillars.
[3] Before the 2008 Law on Decentralisation, provinces were entitled to collect only taxes on artisanal logging. The territory collects taxes on industrial logging.
[4] Source: CCGF workshop.
[5] Sources: Artisanal logger, CCGF workshop.
[6] Sources: Provincial workshop, CDV Moheli, Kinshasa-based forest law expert.

ITB log pile © J. Kiyulu

and that it will take effect only when all implementing decrees have been issued.

Civil society participants in the provincial workshop also questioned the provisions of the forest law, in particular those on the ownership of land and forest resources. Although the law clearly states that all forests belong to the State, civil society groups claim that they belong both to the government and to those who are being governed. In other words, local populations are entitled to a larger share of forest resources and benefits.

As mentioned above, civil society groups at the provincial level also disagree with Article 83 of the forest law concerning the allocation of concessions by tender.

Civil society participation in classifying forests and allocating concession rights was mentioned as an important governance issue. Such participation is absent from the forest law, which foresees only the establishment of a provincial advisory committee with public and private sector representatives. To what extent this committee will consult with local communities remains unclear.

Timber companies pay their *royalties* directly to the national Treasury, in violation of the constitutional requirement that taxes and royalties are collected by local governments (which retain 15%), transferred to the province (which retains a further 25%), and submitted to the national Treasury (the remaining 60%). Currently every administrative level is claiming its share, but the Treasury has yet to disburse any revenues. It is expected that this problem will be partly solved by a recent law granting legal status and transferring certain responsibilities to the province. The collection of taxes at the local government (sector) level will not start until those bodies are operational.

Current tax collecting procedures mean that provinces have no financial or human resources to intervene in the forest sector. They can only impose taxes on artisanal loggers, who are not properly registered as yet.

Information, education and communication. Despite many efforts to disseminate the forest law, it is clear that its provisions are either unknown or ignored by forest governance stakeholders. Familiarity with the forest law alone is insufficient, however. Joint discussion of forest governance issues is also still needed to identify and agree on the way forward, including roles and responsibilities. The environmental radio station will become an important and valuable tool for strengthening IEC actions.

The way forward

Reflections on forest governance in Equator province

Improving forest governance in Equator province requires interventions by many different stakeholders. Collaborative efforts are needed vertically within the administrative hierarchy and between CSOs operating at those levels, and horizontally between different stakeholders. These findings align with the conceptualisation by Bavinck *et al*. (2005) of the principles of governance as complexity, multi-stakeholder involvement, social learning, and a holistic or systems approach.

If we treat forest governance as a system, several external issues must be considered. These include a decentralisation process that still hampers the transfer of forest royalties to the province and the future local governments, an incomplete regulatory framework, the lack of involvement of the public health and education sectors in the social contract, and the energy crisis in Kinshasa. A lack of respect for human rights is also undermining the system.

Within the system we observe that the justice sector in Bikoro plays a negligible or even harmful role in governance. Local populations and the CDVs prefer to manage their own conflicts. Public sector performance is also poor. Some public officials question the legitimacy of the forest law; existing rules and regulations do not provide enough guidance to prevent harmful forest practices; law enforcement is weak; and tax collection and expenditure lack transparency.

Civil society performance at the territorial and provincial levels is weak. The provincial network of NGOs fell apart after its members quarrelled over internal leadership and their representation in the Sun City peace process.[1] CSOs working in Mbandaka are unaware

[1] Put bluntly, the main point of contention was the division of the allowances paid to the CSO representative in the Sun City peace process.

of forest governance issues in Bikoro because there is no exchange of information between the territory and the province.

The weak performance of CSOs and the public sector hampers monitoring of forest concession management and allows elites to capture forest rents from charcoal trading and artisanal logging.

Based on the governance concept developed by Bavinck *et al*. (2005), several conclusions can be drawn about forest governance in Bikoro:

- **Forest governance effectiveness**. The most important issues to be addressed concern the sustainable exploitation of forest resources, in particular the control of charcoal production and trade, artisanal logging, and forest exploitation by companies who entered the territory after the 2002 moratorium. The public sector is ineffective in monitoring and controlling these stakeholders. Law enforcement is weak or absent.
- **Forest governance and the legitimacy of existing institutions, rules and regulations**. The forest law's status as a binding set of rules is questioned by both the public sector and civil society, and rules and regulations for rational forest use are still lacking. Even the credibility of public servants and their administrations is under question because the provincial forest administration and its territorial arms lack human and financial resources, as well as the political will to intervene. The provincial forest administration also lacks power and legitimacy because it is not yet fully operational as a decentralised entity. Lastly the legitimacy of the justice sector is under question because it fails to provide basic guarantees of the human rights of forest governance stakeholders. In the absence of official rules and regulations, the various platforms are currently designing their own institutional arrangements. These include arrangements for negotiating social contracts, denouncing harmful forest practices, monitoring forest exploitation and increasing the transparency of tax collection and expenditure.
- **Normative issues in forest governance**. Civil society in particular is trying to promote broader participation in decision making and greater equity in the sharing of forest resources and benefits. Civil society is also questioning the ownership of forests and forest land. Do these belong to local communities or to the State? These efforts have yet to result in better outcomes for local populations.

Strengthening forest governance through SVBC

SVBC recognises that improving forest governance demands interventions at many levels and from many stakeholders. Its support to platforms at local, territorial and provincial levels is a promising strategy which is already contributing to the following goals:

- Managing conflict at the local level. This has been identified as the most important significant change attributable to the project.
- IEC activities on forest laws and related implementing decrees, and citizens' rights and obligations. These continue to be needed because of the communication failures and cultural obstacles already noted. SVBC has contributed greatly to improving forest governance in terms of providing information, but much remains to be done and not all of it can be achieved by IUCN alone.
- Transparency in tax collection and expenditure. With considerable support from IUCN, some of the rents collected by Bikoro territory have been earmarked for constructing an environmental radio station.

IUCN could increase the added value of its forest governance interventions by reinforcing efforts to develop institutions, rules and regulations. These include agreeing on denouncing harmful forest practices and appropriate sanctioning mechanisms, improving the terms of the social contract for local populations, agreeing on the monitoring of exploitation by timber companies, and increasing the transparency of tax collection and expenditure.

Conclusions

This chapter has explored how SVBC's stakeholders define good forest governance, and how the structures put in place by IUCN can contribute to the principles of good governance.

Table 3 summarises the forest governance issues identified by stakeholders at each administrative level.

When discussing these issues with stakeholders, it became clear that SVBC is operating in a difficult context, and that improving forest governance demands a holistic, process-oriented approach that engages all stakeholders in shared learning. External factors beyond the influence of the project's platforms include decentralisation, the gaps in the regulatory framework, the exclusion of the public health and education sectors from the social contract, the energy crisis in Kinshasa, and a failing justice sector.

It also became clear that both public sector and civil society performance in forest governance has been weak, giving timber companies and other stakeholders a free hand to exploit forest resources as they wish.

SVBC's intervention strategy, which organises stakeholders both horizontally and vertically, is making a valuable contribution to improving forest governance. The major achievements so far include the success of CDVs in managing local conflicts, the project's moderate contribution to IEC activities (moderate because information is not trickling down despite the efforts of many stakeholders), and an initial contribution to increased transparency in tax collection and expenditure.

Future efforts to improve forest governance should address issues of legitimacy and the elaboration of a regulatory framework which will ensure rational forest use. In line with the shared learning processes required for better forest governance, a dialogue between all stakeholders is needed to set further priorities for a "good-enough" governance action agenda.

Table 3 Stakeholder concerns in forest governance, Equator province

Platform	Issue
Local	► Being able to denounce harmful practices to responsive public authorities ► Equity in sharing forest revenues and resources among the local population ► Conflicts managed locally without intervention by the provincial court
Territorial	*The above issues, plus* ► A coherent regulatory framework that guides stakeholder interventions in the forest sector ► Adequate law enforcement ► Transparency in tax collection and expenditure
Provincial	► Equity in sharing forest revenues and resources by the local population ► Transparency in tax collection and expenditure
All levels	► Civil society participation in decision making ► Acceptance of the forest law as a binding set of rules ► Decentralisation of tax collection and expenditure ► Information, education and communication (IEC)

Agroforestry field, SVBC project area, Bikoro © D. Klaver

4 Social accountability for improved forest governance

This chapter discusses answers to the question of what type of accountability arrangements are needed for improved forest governance. Starting with a short account of relevant literature, it identifies three accountability relations, including social accountability, which represents the relation between civil society and the public sector. It then briefly assesses existing social accountability relations in Equator province, identifying three entry points for designing relations within SVBC. Lastly it assesses the factors to be considered in designing accountability relations around these entry points, and the relevance of the criteria identified in the literature.

Accountability and social accountability

Definitions

Lawson & Rakner (2005) define accountability as follows:

> *Accountability denotes a relationship between a bearer of a right or a legitimate claim and the agents or agencies responsible for fulfilling or respecting that right. The most basic accountability relationship is that between a person or agency entrusted with a particular task or certain powers or resources, on the one hand, and the 'principal' on whose behalf the task is undertaken, on the other. Accountability, simply put, is a two-way relationship of power. It denotes the duty to be accountable in return for the delegation of a task, a power or a resource.*

Accountability includes three central elements that shape the relations between stakeholders in society (Mulgan 2000, cited by Ackerman 2005):

- Accountability is external: the account is given to some other person or body outside the person or body being held accountable. This external accountability should not be confused with the internal accountability systems often used in organisations – it is about relations between organisations. Examples of external accountability include the relations between governments and citizens, political parties and voters, boards of corporations and shareholders, and service providers and their clients or users. Examples of internal accountability include the relations between operational staff and supervisors, and between a CSO's administration and its members. In practice, it is difficult to make a clear distinction between external and internal accountability.
- It involves social interaction and exchange, in that the side calling for the account seeks answers and rectification, whereas the side being held accountable responds and accepts sanctions.
- It implies rights of authority, in that those calling for an account are asserting rights of "superior authority" over those who are accountable, including the rights to demand answers and to impose sanctions.

Ackerman (2005) identifies four main strategies to strengthen accountability, of which social accountability is the most recent: 1) Weberian reform (institutionalisation of rationality within the public sector); 2) Marketisation (of public services and introduction of New Public Management (NPM) strategies); 3) Independent agencies (such as ombudsmen, corruption control agencies, legislative investigative commissions and administrative courts); and 4) Social accountability. The last relies on civic engagement, in which ordinary citizens or CSOs, or both, participate directly or indirectly in improving accountability (Malena, Forster & Singh 2004).

Initiatives such as participatory budgeting, administrative reforms, social audits, citizen report cards and community score cards all involve citizens in the oversight of government and can be considered social accountability initiatives.

Ackerman (2005) distinguishes three types of accountability relations (see Figure 1):

- The vertical relations linking citizens to their representatives through elections.
- The horizontal relations and mechanisms requiring public officials and agencies to report not only directly to their superiors, but also horizontally to other officials and agencies within government itself.
- The social accountability relations between the public sector and citizens and civil society.

The design of social accountability mechanisms

Rationale

In recent years social accountability has gained increasing attention as a development strategy. Effective social accountability arrangements are believed to improve governance and reduce poverty in several ways:

- Improved (social) accountability makes a fundamental contribution to developing capacity and may supply a promising

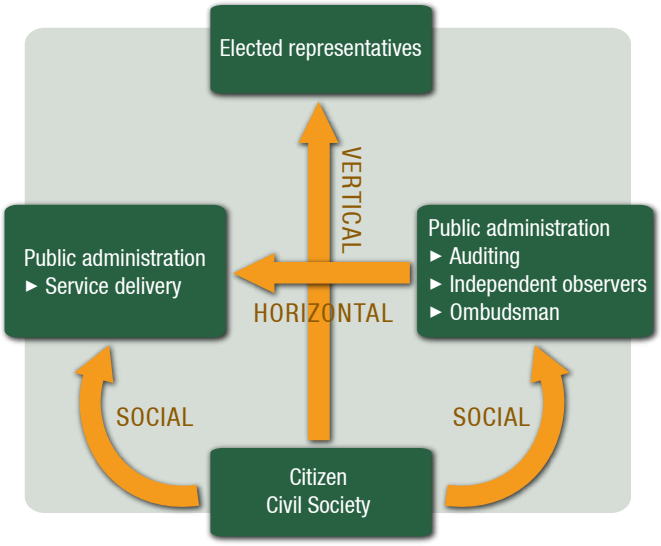


Figure 1 Accountability relations. After Ackerman (2005).

alternative to more conventional training or organisational strengthening approaches (Theisohn 2007).
- Democracy will become stronger, services more efficient, corruption will be exposed and the poorest in society will be better served by public service providers. Good governance practice will be recognised and so respected (World Bank 2004).
- Improved stakeholder voice and accountability contribute to poverty reduction as well as other (indirect) outcomes such as greater ownership of development programmes and pro-poor policies (O'Neill, Foresti & Hudson 2007).
- Civic engagement and appropriate accountability arrangements are seen as the solution to the double crisis of state and market failure in the developing world. Market failure can be corrected through proactive consumers and state failure can be remedied through the action of an informed citizenry which knows its rights and requires government to uphold them (Ackerman 2005).

Issues to take into account when designing social accountability relations

Ackerman (2005) lists six criteria to be considered when designing an accountability relation:

- Incentive structure for good behaviour – punishment or reward-based. This refers to the previously mentioned right or "superior authority" of citizens and civil society to sanction or reward public sector performance.
- Accountability for what – following rules or performance. Do you ask public servants to respect the rules and regulations in place, or to work towards certain results?
- Level of institutionalisation – ranging from independent external initiatives to ones where governments institutionalise participation by external stakeholders.
- Depth of involvement. This concerns the level of participation and influence enjoyed by civil society. It has much to do with the position of civil society organisations in relation to the public sector. The author distinguishes three main positions that civil society can take in relation to the public sector.[1] First, civil society can play the role of a watchdog and evaluate public sector performance in forest governance from the outside. Second, civil society can engage in a dialogue with the public sector to identify and jointly implement strategies for improving governance. Third, civil society can try to influence the public sector's forest governance agenda by means of advocacy and lobbying.
- Inclusiveness of participation – ranging from including only the "well-behaved" groups to consulting extensively with a range of stakeholders, including marginalised groups.
- Branches of government – will the social accountability relation be established between civil society and the executive, legislative or judicial branch of government?

Lawson & Rakner (2005) also identify transparency, "answerability" and controllability as three key criteria for effective accountability relations:

- Transparency means that decisions are taken and business conducted openly, and that sufficient information is available for agencies and the public to assess whether the relevant procedures are being followed, consonant with the given mandate.
- "Answerability" refers to the obligation of decision makers to justify their decisions publicly; to prove they are reasonable, rational and acting within their mandate. It is also about the degree of responsiveness of decision makers to questions from civil society.
- Controllability refers to mechanisms to sanction actions and decisions that run counter to the given mandates and procedures (checks and balances).

Comparing these criteria with those given by Ackerman suggests that transparency and "answerability" are two key criteria to add to the six listed above. Controllability is related to the incentive structure for good behaviour and refers in particular to the possibilities and power sources within civil society for sanctioning inappropriate public sector performance or rewarding good performance.

Malena *et al*. (2004) propose a stepwise approach to creating social accountability mechanisms. The first step is to identify entry points for social accountability, followed by a phase of building an information or evidence base. In the next step, information is brought into the public sphere to stimulate a public debate. Lastly this information is disseminated to a wider audience and changes are negotiated. This approach, however, does not take into account the efforts needed to mobilise support from all stakeholders.

This list of criteria and the process of creating social accountability relations provide some guidance for analysing existing accountability relations generally in Equator province, as well as the quality of the social accountability relations promoted by SVBC.

Implications for the study methodology

The issue under consideration is the accountability arrangements needed for improved forest governance. Following the approach of Malena *et al*. (2004), the first step in this study was to find appropriate entry points for designing social accountability relations. However, the many forest governance challenges identified (see previous chapter) made it difficult to draw up an exhaustive list of possible entry points. The workshop discussions and interviews with informants focused mainly on identifying forest governance issues with implications for accountability arrangements. In practice, accountability was not always put on the agenda of the workshops. It was discussed explicitly only twice: once in the CCGF workshop, where a sub-group of CDVs explored how easy or how difficult it is to denounce harmful forest practices; and once in the provincial workshop, where sub-groups reflected on how to improve public accountability.[2] Clearly more workshop time is needed to analyse accountability arrangements and to assess their potential contribution to improved forest governance.

The following paragraphs analyse the different accountability relations that were identified, and identifies the next steps for IUCN in enhancing social accountability relations.

Accountability relations in Equator province

Figure 2 maps the different accountability relations found in Equator Province. The underlying assumption is that vertical, horizontal and

[1] This classification is the result of discussions in the local governance course organized by Wageningen International and the Royal Tropical Institute in the Netherlands every year from 2004–08.

[2] How to improve accountability – ideas from the provincial workshop:
- Involve all stakeholders in multi-stakeholder platforms
- Use environmental radio
- Make public all information on forest laws, rules and regulations, and licences
- Strengthen the rule of law
- Publish accounts of forest tax income and expenditure
- Publish accounts of taxes paid by companies
- Publish the operational budgets and expected outputs of public agencies
- Respect the constitutional provisions on collecting and allocating forest taxes

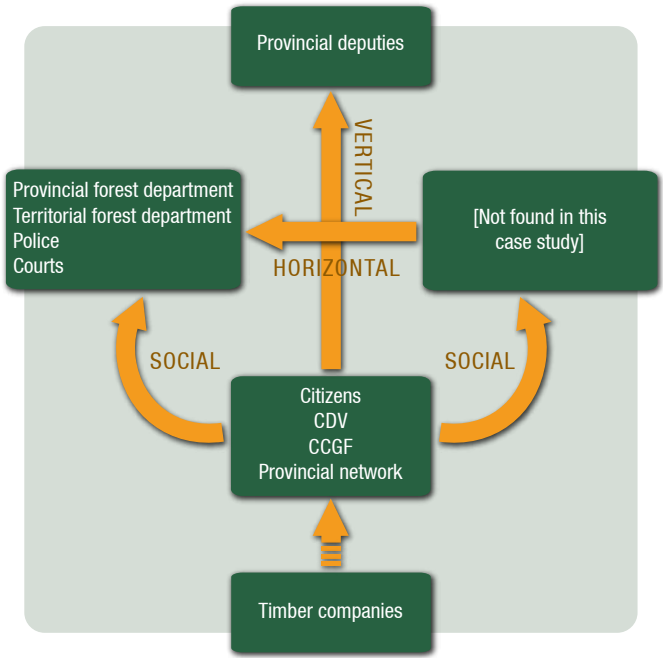


Figure 2 Accountability relations in Equator province

social accountability relations, as well as internal accountability relations within each stakeholder group, must be mutually reinforcing if forest governance is to improve.

The vertical accountability relations are those between the provincial deputies and their electorate. Citizens elected their provincial deputies in 2006, but the provincial parliaments became fully operational only in August 2008. The CSOs are inclined to mistrust provincial deputies because they tend to represent the interests of the clans who elected them rather than the public interest. Provincial deputies state that their role in forest governance is limited. They are uninvolved in the allocation of forest concessions and management planning. Management plans, including the social contracts for infrastructure, are discussed by citizens and the timber companies. The public sector and provincial deputies only intervene when conflicts arise between citizens and the companies. They also have played a minor role in negotiations with a Chinese firm which aims to produce biofuel from a 100,000 ha forest plot. Strategic decisions on the granting of concessions titles are made in Kinshasa.

Provincial deputies also stated that their influence on provincial government is limited in terms of questioning and controlling performance.[1] Instead of asking provincial authorities to enforce the laws and supervise the negotiation and implementation of social contracts, they prefer to organise their own demonstrations against timber companies. The role of provincial parliaments is expected to be strengthened after August 2008.

This vertical accountability relation, as a means for local people to improve forest governance by demanding greater transparency, accountability and responsiveness from provincial law makers, is rather weak. It is expected that vertical accountability relations will strengthen as sector governments are established. There are no vertical accountability relations between the territory and its citizens, because the territory lacks an elected council and its administrator is nominated by central government.

[1] Source: Interview with two provincial deputies.

The author did not find any indications of *horizontal accountability relations* between the public entities that deliver services to citizens and timber companies and those that control them, such as public auditing agencies, public observers or ombudsman. For forest governance this means that no public entities are monitoring the quality of service provision by the provincial and territorial forest departments, the police or the territorial administration. To what extent are decisions on taxes, sanctions and expenditure related to forest resources communicated to citizens and timber companies? And to what extent are those decisions implemented correctly by public officials? The concept of public entities providing services to citizens and entrepreneurs is poorly developed in DRC. Occasionally licences and permits are issued, but usually without sufficient protection or rights to the applicant. Timber companies complain that, despite complying with all laws and regulations, they continue to face demands for different kinds of taxes, licences and permits. Having official papers does not necessarily mean that their concession rights will be protected by the public sector. An operational auditing agency or an ombudsman could eventually play a role in strengthening forest governance and in particular improve the public sector's performance.

The *social accountability relations* in Equator province are limited to those being established by SVBC. In this type of relation, CSOs approach government agencies to request greater answerability and more transparency in decision making. The CDVs, for instance, are asking the territorial and provincial administrations to be more responsive to their complaints about harmful and illegal forest practices. They are also asking for public monitoring of timber companies and their implementation of forest management plans. For the CCGF, the main issues are greater transparency in tax collection and expenditure, as well as effective and correct enforcement of existing rules and regulations. The requests of the provincial platform have yet to be clarified.

A particular feature of the platforms is that they help the timber companies to ask for more transparency in decision making and a more responsive public sector. They also help in establishing a social accountability relation between the public and the private sectors. Timber companies cannot elect representatives to parliament (vertical accountability relation), and horizontal accountability relations link only public sector agencies. The literature consulted does not discuss accountability relations between the private and public sectors. On some issues the companies are aligned with the CSOs, such as increased transparency in tax collection and expenditure and effective law enforcement. But their interests differ when it comes to CSOs monitoring forest management and social contracts. As such, different alliances are likely to be created between the private and public sectors and civil society depending on the issue at stake.

Although social accountability relations seem a promising strategy for strengthened forest governance, they do not provide a source of formal power or "superior authority" to the private sector or CSOs for improving public "answerability" and responsiveness. The current sources of power are the debating skills, technical expertise and charisma of certain platform members.

Internal accountability relations are weak within CSOs and within the public sector. Chapter 2 detailed the issue of the representativeness of CSO members. Chapter 3 illustrated how public officials can ignore existing rules and regulations with impunity.

In summary, vertical and horizontal accountability relations are almost absent in Equator province, and internal accountability

relations within CSOs and the public sector are weak. The SVBC project has played an important role in establishing social accountability relations. Also important is that, whereas the literature does not discuss accountability relations between the private and public sectors, timber companies are involved in the multi-stakeholder platforms, and so – like CSOs – have entry points to request improvements in performance from the public sector. The next section further analyses these relations.

Designing social accountability relations – the way forward

With regard to social accountability, the platforms in Bikoro have identified three entry points for social accountability relations:

- Supporting the initiative of CDVs to denounce harmful and illegal forest practices, as well as asking public authorities to respond promptly to reported cases. The main issues to address in the CCGF and provincial network are safeguarding the interests and rights of those who lodge complaints, agreeing on what constitutes harmful or illegal practice, and defining the responses needed from the public sector.
- Increasing transparency in tax collection and expenditure also calls for the development of an accountability relation. At present the CCGF may be the best level to work at because the territorial administration is entitled to collect taxes on the transport of forest products. So the CCGF could work towards an overview of those revenues, the corresponding expenditures and any anomalies. The timber companies have also suggested monitoring their tax, royalty and licence payments, and using these figures to verify the accounts provided by local authorities. The release of rents to construct a radio station suggests a willingness on the part of territorial authorities to use revenues more transparently (though this was a personal initiative by the territorial administrator rather than a reflection of institutional willingness[1]).
- The CCGF could also work towards a relation calling the public sector to account for verifying industry compliance with social contracts and concession management plans. The public sector is not involved in negotiating social contracts, however, and lacks the resources to monitor forest management plans. So CDVs have proposed acting as independent observers.

Creating these relations would give a more meaningful context to the ongoing dialogue for improved governance and accountability, and strengthening vertical linkages between the platforms created by SVBC would help them progress beyond the successful intervention strategies of conflict management and IEC. These relations have yet to be agreed by the members of the CCGF and provincial network. The most appropriate next step would be to reflect on the entry points and agree on the necessary actions.

Designing social accountability relations in Equator province

This section explores the three entry points for accountability relations in terms of the criteria identified earlier:

- Incentive structure for good behaviour – possibilities to sanction or to reward
- Accountability for what – following rules or performance
- Level of institutionalisation
- Depth of involvement
- Inclusiveness of participation
- Branches of government
- Transparency
- Answerability and responsiveness

The field visit also provided the opportunity to identify other important criteria in the design of social accountability relations. Both will be elaborated in this section.

A first effort to translate the above elements of accountability into a concept of social accountability for SVBC produces the following:

Incentive structure for good behaviour and sanctioning power. What sources of power or "superior authority" do the members of the CCGF and provincial network have to impose sanctions if the public sector does not respond to the harmful and illegal practices exposed by the CDVs? Or if the public sector does not improve the transparency of tax collection and expenditure, or does not monitor the implementation of forest concession management plans? The SVBC project illustrates that sanctioning – and rewarding – powers are still limited and that IUCN's moral support is needed. Neither CSOs nor the timber companies have any legalised or formal right to sanction the public sector in a social accountability relation. They have to rely on other sources of power such as expert power, social status and personal traits such as leadership to demand better public sector performance. Superior authority in a social accountability relation is not formally obtained, but needs to be constructed. Civil society will have more power in a situation where citizens elect their local councils and provincial deputies, and where those elected representatives fulfil their responsibilities, than in one without vertical accountability relations.

Accountability for what – following rules or performance? At present it is unclear whether accountability relations should be based on rules or on performance. When reporting illegal or harmful practices, the CDVs would prefer to have a responsive, i.e. performance-oriented, public sector. But in the cases of enforcing laws and increasing transparency, their emphasis would be on officials respecting and enforcing existing rules.

Level of institutionalisation. The question here is to what extent the public sector will respect decisions made by the CCGF and provincial network. The CCGF's charter does not specify its relations with the territorial administration. The relation between the provincial network and the provincial administration is similarly undefined. Also relevant is the question of the public sector's involvement in and commitment to the CCGF and provincial network. Is this commitment personal or institutional?

Depth of involvement in decision-making. SVBC has opted for dialogue and co-management including joint responsibilities in the CCGF and the provincial networks. If external accountability is between separate entities, to what extent can one talk about an external relation between civil society, timber companies and the public sector if they are organized in platforms that stress co-management with joint responsibilities? Might this approach not compromise civil society in the long run? This question is relevant to the positioning of CDVs as independent forest observers, as co-managers in forest governance, or as lobbying and advocacy organisations. SVBC clearly positioned CDVs in the co-management role within the CCGF, but they have proposed positioning themselves as independent observers of timber company performance.

[1] The territorial administrator of Bikoro was replaced in August 2008, but the new administrator has shown a willingness to convene the CDVs and other stakeholders to discuss forest-related issues in Bikoro.

Inclusiveness of participation of marginalized groups. The assessment of the internal performance of the platforms revealed that CSOs are weak, that those representing marginalised groups find it difficult to participate on equal terms with other stakeholders, that CSOs also have difficulty in collaborating, and that CDVs do not necessarily represent the entire community. The inventory of accountability entry points also shows that the CDVs have made some interesting proposals, whereas CSOs at the territorial and provincial levels have contributed little (see Chapter 2).

Branches of government. The CDV, CCGF and provincial network focus on the executive branch of government. No relations have been established with the legislative (provincial parliament) or judicial branches (provincial court of justice).

Transparency. One of the most important achievements of SVBC is its contribution to disseminating information on laws and regulations concerning forest governance. This and the environmental radio station will positively contribute to transparency. At the same time, the platforms still need IUCN's support to obtain objective information about forest rules and regulations. And, despite these interventions, many stakeholders interpret even written information differently. Disseminating information in DRC is a major challenge, and one that is harming transparency and accountability. The exclusion of marginalised groups or particular clans from certain CDVs is one example of this effect.

Answerability and responsiveness. How can a responsive public sector be created in which decision makers have to explain and justify their decisions, as well as respond to the demands of right holders? When timber companies report artisanal logging in their concessions, they can expect an automatic response. But what if CDVs were to report that the territorial chief of police was involved in the charcoal trade? This question touches on the previously mentioned "superior authority" of civil society and timber companies.

Other factors to consider

Besides the factors identified in the literature, the field visit also provided the opportunity to identify other important considerations in designing social accountability relations.

❶ The denunciation of harmful and illegal practices reveals the following:

- Denouncing harmful and illegal forest practices is easier said than done. Human rights are regularly violated in DRC (Human Rights Watch 2009)[1], and political spaces are increasingly being restricted (Human Rights Watch 2008). The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (United Nations 2007) identifies the "prevailing culture of impunity" as the main threat to security in the Great Lakes Region as a whole, but particularly in DRC. The CDVs fear that their leaders will be jailed for denouncing illegal practices by powerful elites. Respect for human rights is a precondition for establishing effective social accountability relations.
- Knowing what actions are legal or illegal. CDVs can denounce charcoal production and trade, but there are no clear rules regulating this economic activity. How can legality or illegality be determined in the absence of formal legal definitions and guidance? Answering this question could be the first step taken jointly by the SVBC platforms.
- Accountability relations cannot be designed at only one platform or administrative level, because higher levels may interfere with or counteract the response of lower authorities. How can stakeholders ensure that a responsive territorial administration is not overruled by the provincial forestry department or court of justice?[2]

❷ The lack of transparency in tax collection and expenditure highlights the importance of strategically choosing the appropriate administrative level when designing social accountability relations. Arguably such relations are more appropriate where local governments with elected councils are in place, rather than administrative entities performing functions for higher levels of government. Under the ongoing process of decentralisation in DRC, it is expected that local governments will be created at the level of the sector, not the territory. The sector is likely to play an important near-term role in collecting and transferring royalties. The future role of the territory in collecting taxes is uncertain. So it seems more appropriate to establish social accountability mechanisms and pursue fiscal transparency at the sector level, or at the provincial level where decisions on allocation will also be made.

❸ The enforcement of laws on managing concessions and negotiating a fair division of benefits through the social contract underlines the challenges to designing social accountability relations that also involve private sector organisations.

- The position of the private sector in accountability relations between state and non-state stakeholders is not discussed in the literature consulted. It would be interesting to know to what extent the private sector will bend the decisions made in these platforms to its own interests (working towards increased transparency in tax collection and expenditure, but not necessarily towards enforcement of social contracts or concession management plans).
- The public sector does not help to negotiate social contracts, even though it is formally a party to the concession contract signed between central government and the timber company, and despite the fact that it (and future local governments in particular) is responsible for health centres and schools. In this situation, how are local authorities to be held accountable for the future performance of schools and health centres?
- The CDVs have suggested that they monitor implementation of the forest concession management plan, because the public sector is currently incapable of supervising timber companies. The timber companies have rejected the idea of CDVs playing a role as independent observers of the social contract and management plan. The public sector may support this role, but it will need further discussion in the CCGF and the provincial network.

These examples show that the presence of the private sector in forest governance complicates the design of accountability relations. Major issues to take into account include:

[1] Violence and human rights abuses continue in DRC particularly in the east of the country. During 2008 hundreds of civilians were killed, thousands of women and girls raped, and a further 400,000 people displaced by conflict, pushing the total number of displaced persons in North and South Kivu provinces to over 1.2 million.

[2] Two examples illustrate this. The first is the experience of the WRI anti-corruption committees described earlier. The second is when the territorial administrator detained people trapping parrots without a licence. Rather than supporting this action, the province prosecuted the administrator because some of the parrots died.

- Who should be held accountable for what? Should the private sector be held accountable for the negotiation and implementation of social contracts, or is the social contract an issue of public interest and, therefore, of public accountability?
- Should CDVs position themselves as independent monitors in the forest governance regime? Should they stay on the sidelines, urging the public and private sector to fulfil their responsibilities? Or should they take over public tasks such as negotiating social contracts on behalf of local communities?

Pygmies, Bikoro © J. Kiyulu

Conclusions

This chapter aimed to answer the question of what type of accountability arrangements are needed for improved forest governance. It assessed the three types of accountability relations identified by Ackerman (2005), showing that vertical and horizontal relations are almost absent in Equator province. Internal accountability relations within the public sector and within civil society in the province are also weak. The role and position of the private sector in accountability relations are largely ignored in the literature consulted, but in Equator province timber companies are participating in the CCGF and provincial network, giving them the opportunity to establish social accountability relations.

Three potential entry points are identified for developing social accountability relations in Equator province:

1. Supporting the initiative of CDVs to denounce harmful and illegal practices, as well as creating a more responsive public sector.
2. Making tax collection and expenditure more transparent.
3. Enforcing laws, in particular those related to the social contract and forest management, and monitoring the implementation of concession management plans.

A number of factors in the design of social accountability relations can be identified from the literature. A preliminary assessment of the quality of these relations in Equator province concludes that they all focus on the executive branch of government. The possibility of CSOs sanctioning or rewarding public sector performance is limited without strong vertical accountability relations. Other factors influencing the quality of social accountability relations include the transparency and responsiveness of the pubic sector, and the degree to which marginalised groups are included in decision making and oversight.

These factors raise questions about the positioning of the provincial and territorial platforms in Equator province in relation to the public sector (i.e. whether or not the public sector will accept decisions or proposals made by the CCGF or the provincial network). The SVBC project opted for co-management and multi-stakeholder dialogue, whereas the CDVs are proposing themselves as independent observers in the forest governance regime.

The three entry points for social accountability in Bikoro also allow other important considerations to be identified. These are:

- Respect for human rights
- Knowing what actions are legal or illegal. This requires a clear, relevant legal framework.
- Accountability relations cannot be designed at only one administrative level. Vertical linkages are necessary in order to harmonise interventions by CSOs and the public sector at different levels.
- Designing social accountability relations at levels where political decentralisation has established elected representatives with a mandate and a budget.
- The position of the private sector in accountability relations. How can stakeholders ensure that companies are being held accountable for complying with existing regulations when the public sector is not performing? How can they hold the public sector accountable? And how strong is their decision-making power in multi-stakeholder platforms with weak CSO and public sector representatives?

The social accountability relations identified in this chapter should provide the necessary context both for strengthening SVBC's intervention strategy and for strengthening vertical linkages between the CDV, the CCGF and the provincial platform.

5 Reflections on governance, accountability and action research methodologies

This chapter draws out some lessons on analysing forest governance and accountability, and on the action research methodologies used in the study. It also aims to identify key issues to consider in the further analysis of governance and accountability relations within the NRM sector (as well as other sectors).

Forest governance

The governance definition used in this study emphasises "the whole of public and private interactions that are initiated to solve societal problems and create societal opportunities" (Bavinck *et al*. 2005). Important elements are:

- The multi-stakeholder character of governance, including the interests, perceptions and ambitions of different stakeholders.
- Its operation at different policy and administrative levels.
- Its emphasis on adaptive learning to deal with uncertainty and complexity.
- The three "orders" of governance, i.e. those interventions that aim to improve the *effectiveness* of any solutions, those that aim to ensure the *legitimacy* of the institutions, rules and regulations guiding stakeholder interactions, and the *norms and values* underpinning governance principles and giving them their legitimacy.

Initiatives to improve forest governance through a multi-stakeholder process should take into account the following lessons:

Governance can be socially constructed. Stakeholders may have their own perceptions and ideas about how to make forest governance more effective and more legitimate, and what distinguishes "good" from "bad" forest governance. Because governance can be constructed, it will be defined differently in different contexts and circumstances. The case of Equator province shows that stakeholders at local, territorial and provincial levels identify different governance issues, although they all agree on certain core issues.

Improving governance requires a systems perspective in which it is possible to deal with uncertainty and complexity. When constructing an improved forest governance regime through a multi-stakeholder process, it is important to define the boundaries of this system. Important criteria for this delimitation could include the influence and power of stakeholders to bring about positive change in forest governance practice. The Equator province case shows, for example, that human rights and the transfer of tax revenues from national to provincial and local levels are external factors that SVBC projects stakeholders cannot influence.

Viewed from this systems perspective, the key governance elements to take into account are:

- What are or should be the guiding principles of forest governance regimes? All stakeholders in Equator province prefer to use the forest law, its enforcement, social justice and citizenship as a guiding set of principles, with the public sector playing a more central role in forest governance. In practice, the private sector seems to have taken the lead without any countervailing positions being taken by the public sector or CSOs. Locally society is organised according to clans, patron-client relations and a lack of respect for human and political rights. In conclusion there is a considerable gap between the actual and preferred forest governance regime.
- What and where are the critical entry points in the system to bring about change in governance practice? IUCN opted for interventions at three different administrative levels and organised civil society and the private sector at these levels. Because the public sector in DRC is not in a position to contribute to forest governance, one could have also opted for organising stakeholders at the level of each concession. Or is the critical entry point the location where important decisions are made and where policies can be influenced, such as local governments with elected councils, or national government? Alternatively, why not strengthen the capacity of CSOs to act as independent forest monitors? These critical entry points should be jointly identified by stakeholders to design appropriate interventions.
- The internal performance of each stakeholder organisation. The degree to which an organisation, be it public or private, is able to represent its needs and interests will influence its position and legitimacy as a stakeholder in efforts to change governance practice. The weak organisational performance of both public and civil society organisations has given a free hand to the private sector in Equator province.
- Adaptive learning is key in the process of improving forest governance. Stakeholders constantly identify where they are in terms of establishing an effective forest governance regime with legitimate institutions responding to their norms and values. Iterative workshops are necessary to review process and define strategies to cope with uncertainties.

So improving forest governance is a complex process that deals with norms, values and perceptions of "good" governance, the rules, regulations and structures needed to legitimise actions, and the execution of those actions. The field visit to Equator province was a first step in identifying the important forest governance issues to address. Improving governance will require follow-up actions that enable stakeholders to plan jointly their interventions for improving forest governance, to learn from their experiences, and to adjust their strategies. This process approach may require an external facilitator capable of supporting the dialogue between the different intervention levels, as well as strengthening the performance of each level.

Accountability

For the purposes of this study, accountability has been defined as "a relationship between a bearer of a right or a legitimate claim and the agents or agencies responsible for fulfilling or respecting that right" (Lawson & Rakner 2005). It includes three important elements: accountability relations are *between* organisations rather than *within* them, social interaction in terms of answerability and enforceability, and "superior authority" in that those calling for an account must have the rights to demand answers and impose sanctions (Mulgan 2000, cited by Ackerman 2005). Ackerman distinguishes vertical, horizontal and social accountability relations.

"Superior authority" and social accountability relations

The DRC case raises questions about the applicability of "superior authority" in a situation where citizens and CSOs are holding the public sector accountable through social accountability relations. What are the rights, legitimate claims or power that citizens and CSOs can draw on to make the public sector accountable and to impose sanctions? A citizen has legitimate power in a *vertical* accountability relation through elections. But the relations between CSOs as right holders and public sector organisations as duty bearers does not exist formally. CSOs have to rely on soft sources of power such as:

- Strong internal organisational performance. CSOs should demonstrate an ability to meet good governance principles such as democracy, representativeness, transparency, inclusiveness and internal accountability in their own organisations.
- CSOs should operate at different intervention levels, varying from local to national or even supra-national level.
- Civil society organisations should be able to work in coalitions rather than operating as isolated organisations in relation to the State. Their actions should be mutually reinforcing. This is about the ability to create alliances.
- Other important sources of power are capacity for negotiation and dialogue, knowledgeability, social status and personal traits such as leadership capacity.

In future action research, it would be worthwhile exploring the power relations between those who are calling for an account and those who are supposed to be answerable to them. What sources of power are needed to make social accountability relations successful ?

The position of private sector organisations and CSOs in accountability relations

The case of Equator province also raises questions about who should account for what in a situation where the private sector is freely exploiting natural resources. Accountability relations are being established between the public sector, elected representatives, citizens and CSOs. But the position of private sector organisations in accountability relations with the state or the public sector is not addressed in the literature consulted. Yet the DRC case study shows the readiness and need of timber companies to ask the public sector to be accountable. On the other hand, both civil society organisations and the public sector would like the timber companies to account for its activities and, eventually, to justify their presence in Bikoro territory after the 2008 review of all forest concession titles. Some CSOs have even suggested organising themselves as forest monitors and reporting illegal practices by timber companies to government. So what is the position of private sector organisations in the different accountability relations? On some occasions they may align themselves with CSOs; on other occasions, the public sector and CSOs align themselves to control the private sector; and on others CSOs organise themselves to denounce illegal practices by both the private and the public sectors.

Social accountability relations require interventions at different levels or entry points

The literature on social accountability relations discusses practical tools such as participatory budgeting, citizen juries, social audits, citizen report cards and community score cards. In most cases, civil society is asked to give its opinion on the performance of one public sector agency at one administrative level. These tools do not address the multiple relations between different public sector agencies at different administrative levels, nor the relations between CSOs operating at different administrative levels. The SVBC project highlights the importance of linking initiatives vertically to improve the accountability of the public sector. If the CDVs want to have a public sector that reacts to the exposure of illegal charcoal production and trade, not only the territorial administrator but also the court of justice in Mbandaka has to be responsive. The CDVs also need backup and support from the CSOs at territorial and provincial level to prosecute illegal charcoal producers and traders.

The impact of strong social accountability relations on development outcomes and forest governance

The literature consulted is optimistic about the impact of social accountability relations on development (see Chapter 4). Amongst other things, social accountability is seen as a promising alternative to more conventional training or organisational strengthening approaches, and is believed to contribute to capacity development (Theisohn 2007). It may also provide some solutions to the double crisis of state and market failure in the developing world (Ackerman 2005). The SVBC project illustrates some of the advantages of creating multi-stakeholder platforms to discuss forest governance issues. The strengths of these platforms in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes are that all stakeholders obtain the same level of information about forest rules and regulations, procedures, and so on. The DRC case shows that more transparency decreases the number of conflicts based on a lack of information or differing interpretations. With the external support of IUCN, these platforms also show some potential for mobilising revenues for the environmental radio station. But much remains to be done to improve the performance of organisations involved in this project.

To some extent, market failure can be corrected through proactive consumers and state failure through the action of an informed citizenry which knows its rights and requires government to uphold them. In Equator province of DRC, as in other developing and developed countries, private sector organisations and the public sector are collaborating closely for mutual benefit (either in line with rules and regulations or outside them). In practice, civil society needs to be well organised, strong and knowledgeable, and have the financial means to address injustice, illegal practices, corruption and bribery. Further research is needed to identify cases where CSOs and citizens were able to correct both market and state failures in the exploitation of natural resources. This research would focus on the alliances between the public and private sector, and the strategies used by CSOs to improve transparency and become a respected partner in NRM governance.

Action learning and research

This action-learning/research study aimed to initiate a joint learning process aimed at improved forest governance and effective accountability mechanisms in Equator province.

An ideal process of action learning

Ideally the process would allow enough time for stakeholders to:

1. Define good forest governance in their own context, including the accountability relations necessary to improve governance. Here context refers to the different "locations" or intervention levels where forest governance decisions are made or forest resources exploited or traded. Good forest governance would be defined at each level, as it was done at the local, territorial and provincial levels in Equator province.
2. Define a strategic agenda for improving forest governance at each location.
3. Share these ideas among all locations or intervention levels, and agree on a joint action agenda, including the accountability relations that need to be established.
4. Implement the agenda at each level and ensure vertical linkages (bottom-up and top-down communication and alignment).
5. Bring all levels together to review progress in improving forest governance and (re)define the action agenda as necessary.
6. Continue this circle of action learning.

In the time available in Equator province, the joint learning addressed some elements of the first and second steps in terms of exchanging information, views and perceptions about forest governance. The analysis of good forest governance and entry points for accountability relations was done by the researcher-facilitator. There was no time to begin a joint learning process for improving forest governance, so follow up from IUCN is required.

The role of the researcher–facilitator

Given these time constraints, WI concentrated its efforts on collecting data rather than jointly assessing these data with stakeholders. Data analysis was done in the Netherlands, without feedback from the stakeholders. In this respect the role of WI changed from that of a designer and facilitator of an action-research process, to that of an external researcher.

In future the links between the interventions by the researcher-facilitator of an action learning process and their follow-up by the donor or sponsor should be taken into account during planning.

Vertical linkages and multi–stakeholder settings contribute towards new perspectives and actions for improving forest governance

The bottom-up approach used helped to create the vertical linkages necessary in the SVBC project. The study was the first opportunity for CDVs to participate in discussions with stakeholders at the provincial level. Follow-up meetings are needed for jointly analysing forest governance issues. These vertical linkages enable stakeholders to see their problems and challenges from different perspectives The same applies to the multi-stakeholder workshops. Both the CCGF and the provincial workshops were used to interpret rules and regulations jointly, to discuss stakeholders' behaviour, and to increase mutual understanding.

Poling logs © J. Kiyulu

6 Promoting forest governance and accountability – conclusions and recommendations

This exploratory study sought answers to four questions about forest governance in Bikoro territory of Equator province, DRC:

1. What is good forest governance according to the stakeholders involved at different levels in SVBC?
2. What type of accountability arrangements are needed for improved forest governance?
3. What potential do the structures established by SVBC have to improve forest governance and, in particular, accountability?
4. What are the implications for analysing forest governance and accountability in other contexts, including interventions and the action research needed to strengthen them?

This chapter summarizes the answers from the research and makes some recommendations for IUCN. It also draws out some lessons for future analysis of accountability relations.

Answering the research questions

What is good forest governance according to the stakeholders involved at different levels in SVBC?

Table 4 lists the forest governance issues identified as important by project stakeholders.

Table 4 Stakeholder concerns in forest governance, Equator province

Platform	Issue
Local	► Being able to denounce harmful practices to responsive public authorities ► Equity in sharing forest revenues and resources among the local population ► Conflicts managed locally without intervention by the provincial court
Territorial	*The above issues, plus* ► A coherent regulatory framework that guides stakeholder interventions in the forest sector ► Adequate law enforcement ► Transparency in tax collection and expenditure
Provincial	► Equity in sharing forest revenues and resources by the local population ► Transparency in tax collection and expenditure
All levels	► Civil society participation in decision making ► Acceptance of the forest law as a binding set of rules ► Decentralisation of tax collection and expenditure ► Information, education and communication (IEC)

Some of these issues can be addressed by the CDVs, the CCGF and the provincial network, but others are beyond their control and can be considered external factors. These include the decentralisation process, the incomplete regulatory framework, the exclusion of public health and education agencies from negotiations on the social contract, the energy crisis in Kinshasa, and a failing justice sector that undermines respect for human rights.

It is also clear from the study that the performance of the public sector and civil society in forest governance has been weak. The resulting lack of oversight has given timber companies, charcoal producers and artisanal loggers a free hand to exploit forests as they wish.

What type of accountability arrangements are needed for improved forest governance?

The assessment of existing accountability arrangements shows that vertical (between citizens and elected representatives) and horizontal (internal public sector arrangements) accountability relations are almost absent. Potential exists to design new accountability relations between CSOs, the public sector and timber companies based on three entry points:

1. Supporting the initiative of CDVs to denounce harmful and illegal forest practices, as well as asking authorities to respond more promptly to complaints. The main issues to address in the CCGF and provincial network are safeguarding the rights and interests of those who make complaints, agreeing with stakeholders on what constitutes legal or illegal practice, and defining the responses needed from the public sector.
2. Making tax collection and expenditure more transparent also calls for the development of an accountability relation. At present the CCGF is best placed to work on this because the territorial administration has the power to collect certain taxes, and the CCGF could work with it to obtain an overview of these revenues and identify any anomalies. A first step was made in this direction when the CCGF succeeded in obtaining some rent revenues to construct an environmental radio station. Timber companies have also suggested that they monitor their tax payments and use this information to verify the revenues reported by local authorities.
3. The CCGF could also work towards an accountability relation in which the public sector is held accountable for companies complying with their social contracts and concession management plans. At present the public sector is uninvolved in social contract negotiations and lacks the resources to monitor management plans. The CDVs have proposed acting as independent observers of these issues.

What potential do the structures established by IUCN have to improve forest governance and, in particular, accountability?

Answering this question means taking three elements into consideration: the internal performance of each structure; the intervention strategies in place and their future role; and the design of each structure.

The platforms only recently became operational and still face internal performance bottlenecks preventing them from contributing fully to governance and accountability. These include a lack of

representativeness; the limited capacity of some member CSOs to participate effectively in the CCGF; limited public sector capacity; and the dependence of all stakeholders on IUCN for objective information, moral support for the CDVs, day-to-day management of the platforms and meeting allowances.

SVBC has contributed towards the elements of good forest governance in several ways:

- Conflict management at the local level. Stakeholders see this as the most important significant change resulting from the project.
- IEC activities on forest laws and implementing decrees, and stakeholder rights and obligations. These activities continue to be needed because of communication failures and cultural obstacles. SVBC has contributed a great deal to forest governance in terms of providing information, but much remains to be done which cannot be the responsibility of IUCN alone.
- Transparency in tax collection and expenditure. With considerable support from IUCN, some rents collected by Bikoro territory have been used to build an environmental radio station.

IUCN's intervention strategy seems a relevant and promising one in the context of Bikoro, where existing forest rules and regulations do not provide a framework to address forest governance issues at either territorial or provincial level. The structures established under SVBC will contribute to defining local rules, regulations and practices. The project's conflict management and information dissemination strategies have proved successful and should continue. Creating vertical linkages between the three platforms is an important strategy to develop further, as is continuing the dialogue within each platform. These two strategies will be important both for strengthening forest governance and for designing social accountability relations.

What are the implications for analysing forest governance and accountability in other contexts, including interventions and the action research needed to strengthen them?

Initiatives to improve forest governance through a multi-stakeholder process should take into account the following lessons:

Forest governance can be socially constructed and requires a systems perspective to deal with uncertainty and complexity. When constructing "good" forest governance through a multi-stakeholder process it is important to define the boundaries of this system. Important criteria for this delimitation could include the influence and power of stakeholders to bring about positive change in forest governance practices. Key questions to consider are:

- What do stakeholders believe are, or should be, the principles guiding forest governance?
- What and where are the critical entry points in the system to bring about change in governance practices?
- How can the internal performance of each stakeholder organisation be strengthened?
- How can stakeholders be engaged in a process of adaptive learning?

Improving forest governance is a complex process dealing with norms, values and perceptions of good governance, the rules, regulations and structures necessary to legitimise actions, and the effectiveness of those actions in improving forest governance.

The assessment and design of accountability relations, and in particular social accountability relations, require future action research on the following issues:

- How can citizens and CSOs influence the performance of the public and private sectors? A key issue to explore in these relations is the soft sources of power giving CSOs the "superior authority" to demand answers from and impose sanctions on those in charge.
- The position of private sector organisations and CSOs requires special attention in situations where the private sector is exploiting natural resources and where public sector performance is weak. They have the possibility of engaging in a social accountability relation that enables them to align with CSOs on some issues. On others, the public sector and CSOs will have to align themselves to control the private sector.
- Effective social accountability relations require interventions at different decentralised levels or entry points, and should also include vertical alignment and harmonisation of interventions.

The impact of social accountability relations on development outcomes, and in particular on forest and NRM governance, requires further research. To what extent do social accountability relations contribute to developing capacity, and to what extent are CSOs and citizens able to correct market and state failures in the exploitation of natural resources?

An ideal process of action learning for improved forest governance requires more than the two weeks of field work available for this study. It should allow enough time for all stakeholders to jointly assess, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate forest governance and accountability relations. Facilitating the dialogue across vertical linkages and multi-stakeholder settings will contribute towards new perspectives on improving forest governance. These new perspectives will in turn generate new ideas and intervention strategies for better forest governance.

Recommendations for IUCN

Strategic project design issues

Notwithstanding DRC's 2002 moratorium on the allocation, extension and renewal of forest concession titles, and its prolongation in 2005, all timber companies operating in Bikoro obtained their titles after 2002. The titles of Leyda and ITB, the two timber companies most active in SVBC, were withdrawn after a national review of concessions in 2008. The recommendation to IUCN is to consider the legal status of timber companies before engaging with them in its projects.

Another issue is the choice of administrative level for the different project platforms. Although the territory was chosen as the level for the CCGF, the sector and the province will hold a mandate for forest governance under the ongoing process of decentralisation. Amongst other things, the sector will be responsible for local development planning and the social infrastructure created or repaired under social contracts. The role of the territory is still undefined, though it is assumed that it will have only an implementing role as a deconcentrated entity and no decision-making powers.

In light of these observations, it is recommended that IUCN reviews the role and position of the private sector in SVBC, as well as the appropriate administrative levels for future multi-stakeholder dialogue and action.

Promoting forest governance

After identifying forest governance issues in Bikoro with SVBC stakeholders, the next step will be to reconvene stakeholders to

agree on priority issues. This will allow the platforms to decide on their own *good-enough forest governance agendas*.

- First, the platforms should try to cooperate in tackling the charcoal supply chain, artisanal logging and industrial forest exploitation. This should increase the *effectiveness* of their interventions in line with the governance elements identified by Bavinck *et al*. (2005).
- Second, stakeholders should discuss how far they accept the *legitimacy* of existing institutions, rules and regulations, for example the forest law. In the absence of formal or acceptable rules for charcoal production and trade, artisanal logging or industrial forest exploitation, local stakeholders should agree informal rules and regulations.
- Third, agreement should be sought on *normative* issues in forest governance, for example the desired degree of civil society participation in decision making, and the interpretation of equity in the sharing of forest resources and benefits.

Designing social accountability relations

If the platforms decide to pursue one or more of the social accountability relations identified in this study, they should consider the following issues:

- What possibilities do CSOs have to sanction or reward public sector performance?
- To what extent will the public sector accept decisions or proposals made by the CCGF or the provincial network?
- To what extent can CSOs ask for accountability in a situation where human rights are regularly violated?
- In the absence of a clear and comprehensive legal framework, what forest activities should be considered legal or illegal, and who should decide?
- Accountability relations cannot be designed at only one administrative level. Vertical linkages are needed to harmonise interventions by CSOs and the public sector at different levels.
- Design social accountability relations at levels where political decentralisation has established elected representatives with a mandate and budget.
- The position of the private sector in accountability relations, in particular ensuring that they are held accountable for legal compliance when the public sector is not performing.

Implications for intervention strategies

Promoting forest governance and designing social accountability relations will require a slight reorientation of the strategies so far pursued by the platforms. IUCN's efforts will be needed to promote dialogue and communication between the different stakeholders, as well as vertical relations between the platforms. This means more intensive facilitation of general assemblies at each level, as well as facilitating joint meetings at which the three platforms develop their strategic agendas. The strategies of conflict management at the local level and information dissemination should also be continued.

At the same time, it should be recognised that the structures put in place have yet to mature, and that IUCN will organise training to address organisational performance issues.

Recommendations for future action research

An ideal process of action learning and research on forest governance and accountability arrangements would allow enough time for all stakeholders to:

1. Define good forest governance in their own context, including the accountability relations necessary to improve governance. Here the context refers to different "locations" or intervention levels where forest governance decisions are made or forest resources exploited or traded. At these locations good forest governance would be defined, as it was done at the local, territorial and provincial levels in Equator province.
2. Define a strategic agenda for improving forest governance at each location.
3. Share these ideas among all locations or intervention levels, and agree on a joint action agenda, including the accountability relations that need to be established.
4. Implement the agenda at each level and ensure vertical linkages (bottom-up and top-down communication and alignment).
5. Bring all levels together to review progress in improving forest governance and (re)define the action agenda as necessary.
6. Continue this circle of action learning.

This process would involve more than a short field visit, and would include workshops at different levels as well as exchanges allowing the dialogue to span different intervention levels. However, taking into account the limited time usually available for multi-stakeholder workshops, similar assignments in the future should be restricted either to defining an agenda for improved forest governance or to designing accountability relations. It is unlikely that there will be enough time to address both.

The following steps are suggested for a multi-stakeholder workshop aimed at defining a strategic agenda for improving forest governance:

1. Identify relevant and important forest governance issues at locations or intervention levels.
2. Assess the current forest governance situation in terms of its effectiveness, the legitimacy of its structures, its rules and regulations, and the norms and values important to stakeholders.
3. Categorise forest governance issues according to whether they are within or outside the control of stakeholders.
4. Based on steps 1–3, define the elements of a strategic "good-enough" forest governance agenda for joint implementation.

A multi-stakeholder workshop on designing suitable accountability relations or arrangements could follow three steps:

1. Identify entry points for improving accountability, using Figure 1 to map current and desired accountability relations.
2. Assess the feasibility of designing these relations in the prevailing forest governance regime using the eight criteria identified in this study (see Chapter 4).
3. Discuss and agree on actions to reinforce the accountability relations.

Both workshop methodologies would be worth testing in future field assignments on forest governance.

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Workshop participants

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Workshop programmes

	Programme	Methodology	Observations
CDVs	What does the forest mean to us?	Rich picture	To set the context for the workshop
	What has been the most significant change in forest governance and management you have contributed to? How did you contribute?	MSC question as the Discovery phase in the AI methodology	One new and one existing CDV worked together in a pair Rather than comparing the MSC stories, they were clustered by the workshop moderator (WI)
	What are the three most important wishes you have in relation to good forest governance?	Dream phase in AI	Clustering by WI
	How would you realise these dreams of good forest governance, and who should take the lead?	Design/Decision phase in AI	
CCGF	Validation of the findings of the CDV workshop	Presentation of findings and sub-group work (civil society group, public sector group and private sector group)	Because half of participants had participated in the CDV workshop, the WI facilitator wanted to probe the results of that meeting rather than go through another AI process
	Discussion with the CDVs on the constraints and opportunities for denouncing illegal actions	Group work while other groups validate the results of the CDV workshop	This session was organized because the field visit to one village proved that CDVs face difficulties in denouncing illegal practices. This is important in the search for appropriate accountability systems
	Analysis of artisanal logging system and charcoal production and supply system	Sub-group work on the following questions: Are you satisfied with the current system? Who is benefiting from this system? What is needed to improve the governance of this system?	This session was organized to obtain more information on how people see the governance of both forest sub-sectors.
	Formulation of recommendations to CDVs and the CCGF for improving forest governance		
Provincial Network	What does good forest governance mean to you? (In terms of the AI approach, this question belongs to the Dream phase)	Work in sub-groups (civil society, public sector, provincial deputies and private sector) Discussion in plenary leading to identification of three key areas of governance: ❶ Corruption, poor public sector performance and a lack of respect for the law ❷ Design of accountability mechanisms ❸ Amendment of the forest law	
	How can performance in the three key areas of governance be improved? (In terms of the AI approach, this question belongs to the Design phase)	Sub-group work on the above-mentioned topics	
	Formulation of recommendations for the provincial network and CCGF	Plenary session	

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IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization, with more than 1,000 government and NGO members, and almost 11,000 volunteer experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, non-governmental and private sectors around the world.

Wageningen University & Research Centre in the Netherlands aims to address global challenges of sustainable development through what it calls "science for impact". The **Wageningen International Capacity Development and Institutional Change Programme (CD&IC)** is part of this strategy. We offer partners and clients a comprehensive range of capacity development services. These combine our expertise on innovation, learning processes and institutional change. Our approach brings different stakeholders together in constructive dialogue and integrates scientific understanding and technology development with processes of organisational and social change.

We work in partnership with other knowledge centres, government agencies, civil society organisations and businesses from around the world. Our focus is the challenges facing food systems, agricultural markets and trade, natural resources management and the livelihoods of rural people.

CD&IC is hosted by Wageningen International, which provides a focal point for accessing the knowledge and expertise of Wageningen University & Research Centre.

Buitenlandse Zaken
Ontwikkelings
samenwerking

agriculture, nature
and food quality

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