



BASELINE ASSESSMENT OF VPA IMPACT IN GHANA - 2016

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FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

PMB

ACCRA

ACRONYMS

CREMAs	Community Resource Management Areas
CRMC	Community Resource management Committees
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and trade
JMRM	Joint Monitoring Review Mechanism
SFM	sustainable forest management
VPAs	Voluntary Partnership Agreements

Acknowledgement

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The implementation of the VPA may cause multiple impacts in the VPA countries. The FLEGT Action Plan explicitly notes the importance of monitoring the impacts of the VPAs in both the EU and the VPA countries to “...monitor the evolving impact of the programme on forest sector stakeholders, including forest-based industries in the EU and wood-producing countries, and governments and local communities in wood-producing countries” (European Commission, 2003). Implicit in this statement is the need for all members’ countries to monitor the impacts of VPA on the respective countries.

A project, titled 'Towards the Establishment of Baselines for VPA monitoring in Ghana' funded by the UN FAO and implemented by Friends of the Earth Ghana, sought to build upon the work of the Joint Impact Monitoring Team (JMIRM) to establish and implement a VPA joint impact monitoring framework. Through this project, Friends of the Earth-Ghana (FoE-Gh) intends to support the JMIRM by providing benchmarks against which measurement of VPA progress will be made. The baseline established by the end of the project will be used by the Ghanaian government, the EU, civil society organizations and other key stakeholders to measure progress and impact against the existing social, economic and environmental situation.

Collection of baseline information was planned to be limited to Governance (e.g. Accountability, Transparency, Stakeholder involvement, rights, access and tenure), livelihood and socio-economic situation. This report, coming out of the baseline study, attempts to provide an assessment of the governance baseline situation to help monitor VPA impact in Ghana.

An empirical study to obtain data for a baseline assessment of important impact areas was conducted within a period of two months using 20 trained field researchers to employ desk study, survey and informant interviews in six selected forest regions (Eastern, Ashanti, Volta, Western, Central and Brong Ahafo) of Ghana. In all, over 1500 people were interviewed from community to national level. The study was highly relevant as it provided a solid basis for further studies to improve both the methodology and data quality as well as providing at least a scientifically-established baseline scenario for further monitoring governance impacts.

A number of major conclusions from the study can be drawn. First, the study suggests that the forestry sector stakeholders are very much open to sharing information, providing opportunity for the promotion of good governance in the sector. Second, in terms of level of stakeholder engagement, the openness of the engagement processes to other non-state stakeholders and level of knowledge of these stakeholders about how to access relevant information, the baseline situation is generally good. Third, the baseline situation is satisfactory for areas such as progress made in harmonising sector laws, establishing institutions for implementing VPA and the perceived responsiveness of stakeholder representatives in the engagement processes. Fourth, notwithstanding the above, there are important areas that the baseline situation is quite poor.

The governance impact indicator areas studied and the overall assessment from the baseline study is summarised in table 1.

Table 1: Summarized stakeholder assessment of governance impact in VPA (2015)

Areas to be impacted	Criteria	Indicators	Good Governance Indicator (2015)
1. Improvement in law enforcement	1.1. Clear and coherent laws governing forest exist.	1.1.1 The legislative framework governing (legal timber extraction and trade) is clearly defined	3
		1.1.2 Laws are seen to be based on sound and coherent policy framework	
	1.2 Institutional arrangement for monitoring forest law compliance exist.	1.2.1 A wood tracking system is in place and functioning	2
		1.2.2 A dedicated agency or department for monitoring forest law compliance is in place and functioning	
		1.2.3 Transparent verification process and procedures exist	
	1.3 A dedicated agency exercises greater autonomy in its day to day functioning exercise autonomy.	1.3.1 the Timber Verification Council exercises autonomy	2
		1.3.2 TVD audits are conducted based on clear and verifiable protocols	
		1.3.3 Code of behaviour of verification staff clearly defined	
		1.3.4 Conflict of interest rules stated and codified	
	1.4 Improved compliance of forest laws and regulations.	1.4.1 All timber right holding are in compliance with applicable laws	2
		1.4.2 All cases of illegal logging, illegal agricultural activities, chainsaw operations and other forest offences committed by any person, institution or group of people are prosecuted	
		1.4.3 All forms of timber rights are allocated in compliance with relevant legislation	
	1.5 Stakeholder rights are respected and enforced.	1.5.1 Farmers right of consent for the allocation of timber right is fully respected	3
		1.5.2 Communities benefit from forest revenues allocated to traditional authorities (as fiduciaries) including SRAs	
		1.5.3 Farmer right to compensation payment for on-farm logging is respected	
	1.6 Minimal interference of higher level authorities	1.6.1 district-level and field staff can exercise greater autonomy within their mandates in their daily functions	2

Areas to be impacted	Criteria	Indicators	Good Governance Indicator (2015)	
2 Effectiveness of stakeholder representation, consultation and participation	over lower-level functional units.	1.6.2 progressive reduction of political interference in the sector at district and corporate levels of decision-making		
	2.1 Stakeholder engagement arrangement in place.	2.1.1 An existing arrangement towards stakeholder engagement is adequately implemented	3	
		2.1.2 There exist multi-stakeholder consultative platforms at district and national levels		
	2.2 Stakeholders have access to consultative processes.	2.2.1 Decision-making processes requiring consultation are publicly announced	4	
		2.2.2 Consultative platforms are largely open and equal right of participation is respected		
		2.2.3 Stakeholders have reward/sanction mechanisms for accountability		
	2.3 Stakeholder representatives are responsive and accountable to their constituents.	2.3.1 Representatives positions are fairly shared and owned by their group	1	
		2.3.2 Stakeholder groups have clear feedback and reporting mechanisms		
		2.3.3 Stakeholders have reward/sanction mechanisms for accountability		
		2.4.1 institutional structures that ensure cooperation between and among programmes and projects within the FC exist and functioning		3
		2.4.2 institutional structures that ensure cooperation between and among agencies within the FC exist and functioning		
	2.4.3 institutional structures that ensure cooperation between FC and relevant agencies and ministries exist and functioning			
3 Improvement of transparency and accountability in the forest sector	3.1 Procedures to obtain information are clear and accessible to stakeholders and the public.	3.1.1 Stakeholders and the public know where and how to obtain forestry-related information	5	
		3.1.2 Communities and women have the requisite capacity to access information.		
	3.2 Transparency in the computation and collection of forest revenue.	3.1.3 CRMC and CREMAs are better strengthened to play their collaborative roles	3	
		3.2.1 Expected and collected revenue can be independently validated by third parties		
	3.3 Improved accountability in the distribution of forest revenue.	3.3.1 Beneficiaries know how much revenue is collected and their share	2	
		3.3.2 There is evidence of what revenue from royalties and SRAs have been used for at the		

Areas to be impacted	Criteria	Indicators	Good Governance Indicator (2015)
		District, traditional council and community-level	
	3.4 Existence of a clear and accessible redress mechanisms for grievances	3.4.1 There is a dispute resolution mechanism to address forest disputes on the ground	1
		3.4.2 The Dispute resolution mechanism (DRM) is known and accessible to all forest stakeholders	
	3.5 Public perception about rent-seeking and corruption behaviour in the sector.	3.5.1 Rating of stakeholder perception about corrupt behaviour of the timber industry in the application for timber rights and their forest-level operations	1
		3.5.2 Rating of stakeholder perception about corrupt behaviour of the law enforcement agencies in their dealing with illegal operators	
		3.5.3 Rating of stakeholder perception about corrupt behaviour of forestry officials in timber rights allocation and forest-level operations	
OVERALL GOVERNANCE IMPACT			2.5

The indicators include law enforcement and prosecution of offences, respect for farmer rights, accountability of stakeholder representatives in consultative processes, access to clear dispute resolution procedures and forestry extension to disseminate information on relevant laws to farmers. The study has developed a graphical matrix depicting the baseline assessment position of each of the fifteen important areas studied and has estimated the baseline index for good governance for Ghana to be 2.5. This suggests that even though Ghana has made some progress as of 2015, there is much room for improvement, particularly in the areas that score poor to satisfactory.

The study recommends that an expert validation of the baseline assessment be made to inform a revision to help establish a solid basis for impact monitoring assessment. More substantively, efforts to improve law enforcement, establish a dispute resolution mechanism especially at forest management level, and improve forest extension and education on farmer rights and to improve democratic representation in stakeholder consultation processes in the sector are urgent governance issues.

Moving forward, steps should be taken to institutionalise continuous data collection by civil society, the VPA Team and the Forestry Commission in order to facilitate easy monitoring of progress being made in specific governance impact areas. Therefore, standardizing the methodology and developing a protocol which can be used by relevant institutions becomes a critical follow-up assignment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ghana was among the first country to have concluded and signed a VPA with the EU in 2009. With a national forest and wildlife policy that aspires to a regime of sustainable forest management and a fairly long history of less than satisfactory attempts at improving on regulatory controls within the forest sector, Ghana found the objectives of the VPA in alignment with its on-going efforts. An added reason for buying into the EU's VPA was the fact that Ghana's major timber export destination was the EU market. At the time of indicating a preparedness to enter into negotiations, the EU accounted for over 60% in volume and value of Ghana's timber exports (TIDD, 2007). This figure has however declined over the last four years to 40%. This change has been attributed to the growing Asian/Chinese and West African trade (TIDD, 2011). Overall, the stated vision of Ghana as it entered and negotiated a VPA was "To create an environment that promotes sustainable forest management (SFM), improves rural livelihoods and equity as well as enabling industrial efficiency in a good governance environment". The operative words being: "SFM, Poverty Reduction, Value Addition & a Sustainable Industry, Good Governance".

To achieve this vision, Ghana critically brought its domestic interest on to the negotiation table, insisting that the VPA would only be of value to the nation, if it addressed the development and regulation of the domestic market on one hand and the restructuring of the Ghana timber industry on the other hand. Thus whereas the original elements of the VPA as presented by the EU were definition of legality, a chain of custody system, a system to monitor compliance to the legal standard so developed, a licensing system and an independent monitor stimulating systemic improvements on the entire legality assurance system, the Ghana agreement has broader objectives. The EU initiative under the VPA was export focused but as it pertains in Ghana it contains elements for sustainability.

On the issue of the domestic market, Ghana's argument has been that the 'end game' is sustainability. Securing exports alone without stemming the tide of the deforestation induced by an undeveloped and unstructured domestic market will not be useful. Legality as a first step to sustainability was therefore to be ensured across board.

1.1 Background

To address the problems associated with illegal logging, the European Commission prepared and adopted an EU Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and trade (FLEGT) in 2003. One of the strategies was to provide support for improved governance in wood-producing (or

processing or exporting) countries and to introduce a licensing scheme to secure that only legal timber enters the EU through Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) between the EU and government of a timber producer country.

The implementation of the VPA may cause multiple impacts in the VPA countries. The FLEGT Action Plan explicitly notes the importance of monitoring the impacts of the VPAs in both the EU and the VPA countries to “...monitor the evolving impact of the programme on forest sector stakeholders, including forest-based industries in the EU and wood-producing countries, and governments and local communities in wood-producing countries” (European Commission, 2003)

The implementation of VPA in Ghana is on course though critical timelines such as the date for the issuance of FLEGT license has delayed. The VPA has six main implementation components namely

- definition of legal timber (legality standard),
- chain of custody driven by a Wood Tracking System,
- legality verification system,
- legality licensing system and
- independent monitoring.

The WTS is a final stage roll out following some initial limited roll out in some 13 forest districts and 8 TIDD offices. Verification protocol and audit systems have been developed, tested and adopted for nation-wide use. Closed to 30 audits have been conducted across 7 regions in several districts and covering the operations of more than 20 timber companies in Ghana. FLEGT licensing system has been developed but not yet fully tested. An independent monitor has been appointed and has begun working. A first independent audit of Ghana legality assurance system has been undertaken.

1.2 Context

In Ghana, communication about the impacts of EU FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) on local communities, the industry or other stakeholders, including those engaged in illegal logging, has been slow, partly due to the lack of reference data. The Joint Monitoring Review Mechanism (JMRRM), established by the European Union and Ghana, has the mandate, enshrined in Article 19 (3d) of the VPA, to assess the social, economic and environmental impacts of the VPA and develop an impact monitoring system of the VPA. However, lack of identified and

established qualitative and quantitative benchmarks for the impact monitoring system risks hampering its development and credibility.

This project, titled 'towards the establishment of baselines for VPA monitoring in Ghana' funded by the UN FAO and implemented by Friends of the Earth Ghana, sought to build upon the work of the joint impact monitoring team to establish and implement a VPA joint impact monitoring framework. Through this project, Friends of the Earth-Ghana (FoE-Gh) intends to support the JMIRM by providing benchmarks against which measurement of VPA progress will be made. The baseline established by the end of the project will be used by the Ghanaian government, the EU, civil society organizations and other key stakeholders to measure progress and impact against the existing social, economic and environmental situation. Collection of baseline information was planned to be limited to Governance (e.g. Accountability, Transparency, Stakeholder involvement, rights, access and tenure), livelihood and socio-economic situation. Scorecard assessments and surveys were envisaged to be used to collect baseline information on these identified impact areas.

Since the inception of the FLEGT VPA initiative in 2003, especially after 2009 when Ghana signed the first Agreement, there have been few studies that have proposed an impact monitoring framework (see Proforest 2012; Tegegne et al., 2014¹). Tegegne et al (2014) provides a somewhat generic 'universal' indicator framework for VPA monitoring which proposes 46 indicators with 26 of them under the theme of governance. As they rightly stated "these impact areas provide useful input for national discussions but should not be considered a blueprint because it is essential to have an open, participatory, stakeholder-led discussion to develop a nationally agreed set of impacts" this can only provide guidance. The development of VPA impact indicator framework for governance and livelihoods has followed this recommendation.

As part of the initial work that informed the baseline study, an impact monitoring framework was developed. The objective was not to look at VPA governance but how VPA, as intervention, is impacting on critical governance arenas in the forestry landscape of Ghana. Therefore, to develop an impact indicator matrix, a global framework to define the general 'universal' principles of good forest governance and their associated criteria and indicators was fundamental. This is so because, it defines the conceptual boundaries within which the issues of governance in the forestry sector can be firmed up for purposes of systematic analysis and design. In this regard,

¹ Tegegne, Y. T., J. van Brusselen, D. Tuomasjukka and M. Lindner. 2014. Proposing an indicator framework for FLEGT voluntary partnership agreements impact monitoring. *Ecological Indicators* 46, pp487-494

Proforest. 2012. VPA impact monitoring: options Paper and Indicator. Proforest

the contemporary global literature on good forest governance has been reviewed by Tafadzwa and Marfo (2014²) and used to develop a generic framework.

Following this, issues affecting these governance principles and criteria in the forestry landscape based on policy documents, various consultancy reports and research works were reviewed. The aim was to construct a grand narrative, pointing out critical areas and the gaps in the governance landscape in the forestry sector that impacts are required to improve the situation. This will by no means be an exhaustive review and the construction of such a grand narrative must be viewed as on-going work which can be enriched as and when more scholarly observations are made. However, it is felt at this moment that the review has been comprehensive enough to provide a basis for constructing critical governance issues that can inform the development of an impact indicator matrix. The content of the grand narrative was used to develop the governance impact areas, criteria and indicator matrix.

Following the initial draft of the impact indicator matrix, an expert validation workshop, held in Accra on 13th August 2015 was organised. The initial drafts have been reviewed following the inputs from the multi-stakeholder expert and the VPA Joint Monitoring and Review committee.

1.3 Study methodology

The study followed a six-stepwise process to collect, analysed, and synthesized data to formulate the indicators for baseline assessment as follows:

- i. Pre-indicators formulation process. In order to establish the baseline scenario for the impact areas, an empirical study, based on surveys and informant and expert interviews, was conducted across six regions of Ghana - namely Ashanti, Volta, Western, Central, Eastern and Brong Ahafo. In addition, desk studies were undertaken in order to obtain data to determine a baseline situation. During the pre-indicators formulation era, the study identified the VPA target landscape and specific geographical areas (communities) for the VPA FLEGT. This was jointly done by the Consultant and staff of the Forestry Commission. The second approach was to define the relevant stakeholders involved in the FLEGT/VPA initiatives. The main stakeholders identified were:
 - Farmers
 - Traditional Authorities
 - National forestry experts
 - Community stakeholders (informants)

² Tafadzwa M. and E. Marfo. 2014. Towards an assessment framework for good forest governance. FORIG Technical Report (forthcoming)

- District forest officers
- District stakeholders (informants)
- Development partners

- ii. Desktop review of all relevant documents on VPA including all joint evaluation mission and field monitoring report and an impact monitoring framework (see Proforest 2012; Tegegne et al., 2014). Tegegne et al (2014) that provided a somewhat generic ‘universal’ indicator framework for VPA monitoring which proposes 46 indicators with 26 of them under the theme of governance. As they rightly stated “these impact areas provide useful input for national discussions but should not be considered a blueprint because it is essential to have an open, participatory, stakeholder-led discussion to develop a nationally agreed set of impacts” this can only provide guidance. The development of VPA impact indicator framework for governance and livelihoods has followed this recommendation.

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Following this, issues affecting these governance principles and criteria in the forestry landscape based on policy documents, various consultancy reports and research works were reviewed. The aim was to construct a grand narrative, pointing out critical areas and the gaps in the governance landscape in the forestry sector that impacts are required to improve the situation. This will by no means be an exhaustive review and the construction of such a grand narrative must be viewed as on-going work which can be enriched as and when more scholarly observations are made. However, it is felt at this moment that the review has been comprehensive enough to provide a basis for constructing critical governance issues that can inform the development of an impact indicator matrix. This review gave an understanding of the progress and all the issues involved in the VPA agreement. The consultant used this information to formulate a theoretical model.

- iii. Self-Assessment: The consultant in collaboration with the FOE Secretariat adopted a self-assessment questionnaire and mailed them to the relevant stakeholders to identify the

indicators for VPA. The questionnaire requested each organization to describe the main indicator and the attributes. Using the 2012 Forest and Wildlife Policy, the consultant used the response of the questionnaire to develop a theoretic framework as monitoring indicators (Table 2). The Governance indicators framework has three main impact areas with 15 criteria and 39 performance indicators. Each impact area has specific criteria and indicators (Table 2).

- iv. Pre-testing of the indicators. The consultant working together with FOE Ghana conducted pre-testing of the indicators. There were 25 stakeholders involved in the pretesting. The result of the pre-testing exercise was used to improve on the framework. The final output is shown in Table 2.
- v. Field Data Collection: Following this, issues affecting the governance principles and criteria in the forestry landscape based on policy documents, various consultancy reports and research works were reviewed. The aim was to construct a framework, pointing out critical areas and the gaps in the governance landscape in the forestry sector that impacts are required to improve the situation. This was by no means be an exhaustive review and the construction of such a grand narrative must be viewed as on-going work which can be enriched as and when more scholarly observations are made. However, it was felt at this moment that the review had been comprehensive enough to provide a basis for constructing critical governance issues that can inform the development of an impact indicator matrix. Following the initial draft of the impact indicator matrix, an expert validation workshop, was held in Accra on 13th August 2015. The initial drafts were reviewed following the inputs from the multi-stakeholder expert and the VPA Joint Monitoring and Review committee.
- vi. Analysis and synthesis of data. The main objective of applying the questionnaire technique in this study was to correlate informed opinions and gain consensus from wide range of expertise to define baseline data for measuring VPA in Ghana. The study methodology was designed to encourage guided debate among the stakeholders whilst maintaining the independence of the personalities. The research process was a multi-round survey using series of questionnaires to seek expertise knowledge on the reliance of the criteria and indicators in Ghana using a five-point likert scale. Data processing in this study aimed at discovering and aggregating respondent's opinion for purpose of building consensus. There are no standardized mathematical aggregations for data analysis, however the most frequently used statistical averages was the mean and standard deviation for each indicators ranked. The mean indicators were used to determine the weight of the criteria. The standard deviation indicated dispersion among the respondent opinion. The smaller the standard deviation the closer the expert opinion on the relevance of the criteria.

Table 2: Governance impact model for *VPA Baseline Assessment in Ghana (2015)*

Areas to be impacted	Criteria	Indicators
1. Improvement in law enforcement	1.1. Clear and coherent laws governing forest exist	1.1.1 The legislative framework governing (legal timber extraction and trade) is clearly defined
		1.1.2 Laws are seen to be based on sound and coherent policy framework
	1.2 Institutional arrangement for monitoring forest law compliance exist	1.2.1 A wood tracking system is in place and functioning
		1.2.2 A dedicated agency or department for monitoring forest law compliance is in place and functioning
		1.2.3 Transparent verification process and procedures exist
	1.3 A dedicated agency exercises greater autonomy in its day to day functioning exercise autonomy	1.3.1 the Timber Verification Council exercises autonomy
		1.3.2 TVD audits are conducted based on clear and verifiable protocols
		1.3.3 Code of behaviour of verification staff clearly defined
		1.3.4 Conflict of interest rules stated and codified
	1.4 Improved compliance of forest laws and regulations	1.4.1 All timber right holding are in compliance with applicable laws
		1.4.2 All cases of illegal logging, illegal agricultural activities, chainsaw operations and other forest offences committed by any person, institution or group of people are prosecuted
		1.4.3 All forms of timber rights are allocated in compliance with relevant legislation
	1.5 Stakeholder rights are respected and enforced	1.5.1 Farmers right of consent for the allocation of timber right is fully respected
		1.5.2 Communities benefit from forest revenues allocated to traditional authorities (as fiduciaries) including SRAs
		1.5.3 Farmer right to compensation payment for on-farm logging is respected
	1.6 minimal interference of higher level authorities over lower-level functional units	1.6.1 district-level and field staff can exercise greater autonomy within their mandates in their daily functions
	1.6.2 progressive reduction of political interference in the sector at district and corporate levels of decision-making	

Areas to be impacted	Criteria	Indicators
2 Effectiveness of stakeholder representation, consultation and participation	2.1 stakeholder engagement arrangement in place	2.1.1 An existing arrangement towards stakeholder engagement is adequately implemented
		2.1.2 There exist multi-stakeholder consultative platforms at district and national levels
	2.2 Stakeholders have access to consultative processes	2.2.1 Decision-making processes requiring consultation are publicly announced
		2.2.2 Consultative platforms are largely open and equal right of participation is respected
	2.3 Stakeholder representatives are responsive and accountable to their constituents	2.3.1 Representatives positions are fairly shared and owned by their group
		2.3.2 Stakeholder groups have clear feedback and reporting mechanisms
		2.3.3 Stakeholders have reward/sanction mechanisms for accountability
	2.4 effective coordination among and within sector institutions	2.4.1 institutional structures that ensure cooperation between and among programmes and projects within the FC exist and functioning
		2.4.2 institutional structures that ensure cooperation between and among agencies within the FC exist and functioning
		2.4.3 institutional structures that ensure cooperation between FC and relevant agencies and ministries exist and functioning
3 Improvement of transparency and accountability in the forest sector	3.1 Procedures to obtain information are clear and accessible to stakeholders and the public	3.1.1 Stakeholders and the public know where and how to obtain forestry-related information
		3.1.2 Communities and women have the requisite capacity to access information.
		3.1.3 CRMC and CREMAs are better strengthened to play their collaborative roles
	3.2 Transparency in the computation and collection of forest revenue	3.2.1 Expected and collected revenue can be independently validated by third parties
	3.3 Improved accountability in the distribution of forest revenue	3.3.1 Beneficiaries know how much revenue is collected and their share
		3.3.2 There is evidence of what revenue from royalties and SRAs have been used for at the District, traditional council and community-level
		3.4.1 There is a dispute resolution mechanism to address forest disputes on the ground

Areas to be impacted	Criteria	Indicators
	3.4 Existence of a clear and accessible redress mechanisms for grievances	3.4.2 The Dispute resolution mechanism (DRM) is known and accessible to all forest stakeholders
	3.5 Public perception about rent-seeking and corruption behaviour in the sector	3.5.1 Rating of stakeholder perception about corrupt behaviour of the timber industry in the application for timber rights and their forest-level operations
		3.5.2 Rating of stakeholder perception about corrupt behaviour of the law enforcement agencies in their dealing with illegal operators
		3.5.3 Rating of stakeholder perception about corrupt behaviour of forestry officials in timber rights allocation and forest-level operations

1.4. Establishing the baseline data

In order to establish the baseline scenario for the impact areas, an empirical study, based on surveys and informant and expert interviews, was conducted across six forest regions of Ghana; Ashanti, Volta, Western, Central, Eastern and Brong Ahafo (Table 3)..

Table 3: *Summary of actors interviewed and a description of their selection criteria and the actual number who finally responded to the study*

Actors interviewed	Number targeted	Number who responded
Farmers	900 (30 farmers from 30 communities selected from 5 districts in each region) Selection purposive based on experience with on-farm logging	794
National experts	30 experts with substantial knowledge about the sector at all scales	17
Community stakeholders (informants)	180 informants selected from various forest stakeholder groups in 30 selected communities	131
District forest officers	90 (3 district forest officers from 5 districts selected from the 6 regions)	64
District stakeholders (informants)	300 informants selected from various forest stakeholder groups in 30 selected forest districts	205
Total Respondents	1510	1211

Table 4: Category and number of district forest officials interviewed

District forest- stakeholder categories	Frequency	Percent
District Manager	20	31.3
Assistant District Manager	12	18.8
District Accountant	1	1.6
Forester	3	4.1
Range Supervisor	28	43.8
Total	64	100

Table 5: Categories and number of community and district level stakeholders interviewed (informants)

category	number	%
Traditional authorities	92	29
local government	106	34
CREMA	5	2
CRMC/CFC	46	15
Forest Forum	5	2
CBO	4	1
Industry	24	8
missing	33	10
Total	315	100

The research instruments used for the various interviews are provided as Annex 2. Annex 3 gives a list of the trained research assistants who collected data from the field for a period of 2 months (October to November 2015).

The data was analysed using SPSS and a summary of the descriptive statistics that formed the basis of the quantitative data presented in the report has been given as Annex 4. The study instruments were designed to be able to provide data to assess the current situation of how the various indicators in the matrix stand. However, the quality of the responses and the empirical data obtained could only not fully exhaust a measurement of all the 37 indicators. However, at least one indicator 'measurement' was obtained for 11 criteria areas in the matrix and these were used as proxy indicators for the various criteria.

The criteria in the Matrix that no data on any indicators were obtained from the empirical study were assessment of:

- i. the autonomy of TVD (criteria 1.3)
- ii. the effectiveness of coordination among and within sector institutions (criteria 2.4)
- iii. the transparency in the computation and collection of forest revenue (criteria 3.2) and
- iv. the improvement in accountability of distribution of forest revenue (criteria 3.3)

Although anecdotal information exist to make some assessment in these areas (see grand narrative), they were been excluded from the analysis presented in the results of the baseline situation until more empirical data could be obtained.

The analysis of the data to assess the baseline situation involved assigning quantitative scores to the proportion of respondents' perception about a particular issue.

The responses from the study instruments as well as codes of cases (category of respondent, forest district and so on) were entered into SPSS software and frequency summaries were generated.

Since the fundamental empirical basis of the analysis rested on 'perception' or the evaluation of the appropriate response by the respondent (informants), the study relied our scoring based on the proportion of respondents and their responses. Thus, we relied mainly on percentage of respondents.

The results are generally presented in a narrative summary where the responses on various questions that relate to a particular criteria being assessed is given. This is to provide a qualitative assessment and a general enlightenment of the issue. Thus, it is common to find commentary such X% said this but Y% had also indicated that. The second aspect of the presentation of the results involved the overall ranking for a particular governance impact criteria area based on the scores of the individual responses related to the criteria area (call it 'proxy' indicator). The ranking was done on the basis of percentage scores observed from the frequency distribution tables generated from the dataset by SPSS.

The ranking scale used for the assessment was as follows:

- below 25% = very poor,
- 25-45% = poor,
- 45-55%=satisfactory,
- 55-75%= good and

- above 75% = very good.

This to a large extent was subjective but justified on the basis that values around 50% was to be taken to be satisfactory and that the upper quarter and lower quarters should be taken to be very good and very poor respectively. This automatically defined the ranges for the poor and good rankings. Colour codes were used to depict over score from red to deep green. A positive response given by below 45% of respondents was considered 'generally poor'. Since a maximum of two proxy indicator responses were observed in the narrative summary of each criteria area, the overall rank assigned for that particular area was based on the scores described in Table 5. The basis of the assigned ranking was to attempt to reach an average between the two.

Table 6: Overall Ranking

Evaluative Response 1	Evaluative response 2	Overall rank assigned
Generally Poor	Generally poor	Very Poor
Generally Poor	satisfactory	poor
Generally Poor	Good	Satisfactory
Generally Poor	Very good	good
Satisfactory	satisfactory	satisfactory
Satisfactory	Good	Good
Satisfactory	Very good	Good
Good	Good	Good
Good	very good	Very Good
Very Good	Very good	Very Good

After assigning aggregate ranking to each assessment area, a 1-5 numerical weight was assigned to the ranks from very poor to very good. The numerical weights were then used to compute an overall good governance index (GGI) ranging from 1 signifying very poor performance to 5 signifying very good performance. The index was calculated with the formula:

$$GGI = \frac{(A_1 \times f_{R1}) + (A_2 \times f_{R2}) + (A_n \times f_{Rn})}{N}$$

Where;

GGI = good governance index

A₁ = numerical rank of assessment area 1 up to the *n*th assessment

f_R = the frequency of areas scored under respective ranks, *R*₁, *R*₂...*R*_{*n*}

N = total number of assessment areas

2.0 RESULTS OF BASELINE ASSESSMENT

The result of the baseline assessment of the governance impact of the VPA is shown in Table 6. The Table 6 summarizes the average impact scored by the various stakeholders for each indicator and the corresponding standard deviation. Using the GGI the overall impact was calculated for each criterion. The average impact score for the indicators were calculated to get the overall good governance indicator for the base line assessment.

The table shows the areas to be impacted, the criteria and the indicators for each criterion. The aggregated stakeholders' assessment of each indicator is estimated from the responses in the questionnaire and using the GGI. The standard deviations among the respondents assessment was calculated to determine the variations in opinion.

From the analysis, there were close opinion in assessing the indicators. This was shown by the size of the standard deviation (SD) which was very low. The average SD was 0.03 which is an indication of how close the opinions were in determining the relevance of each indicator.

Table 7: Stakeholders Assessment of the good governance indicators for VPA (2015)

Areas to be impacted	Criteria	Indicators	stakeholders Assessment (2015)					Good Governance Indicator (2015)	Standard Deviation
			Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Poor (2)	Very poor (1)		
1. Improvement in law enforcement	1.1. Clear and coherent laws governing forest exist.	1.1.1 The legislative framework governing (legal timber extraction and trade) is clearly defined			Satisfactory			3	0.06
		1.1.2 Laws are seen to be based on sound and coherent policy framework				Poor			
	1.2 Institutional arrangement for monitoring forest law compliance exist.	1.2.1 A wood tracking system is in place and functioning				Poor		2	0.09
		1.2.2 A dedicated agency or department for monitoring forest law compliance is in place and functioning			Satisfactory				
		1.2.3 Transparent verification process and procedures exist				Poor			
	1.3 A dedicated agency exercises greater autonomy in its day to day functioning exercise autonomy.	1.3.1 the Timber Verification Council exercises autonomy				Poor		2	0.05
		1.3.2 TVD audits are conducted based on clear and verifiable protocols				Poor			
		1.3.3 Code of behaviour of verification staff clearly defined				Poor			

Areas to be impacted	Criteria	Indicators	stakeholders Assessment (2015)					Good Governance Indicator (2015)	Standard Deviation
			Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Poor (2)	Very poor (1)		
		1.3.4 Conflict of interest rules stated and codified				Poor			
	1.4 Improved compliance of forest laws and regulations.	1.4.1 All timber right holding are in compliance with applicable laws				Poor		2	0.02
		1.4.2 All cases of illegal logging, illegal agricultural activities, chainsaw operations and other forest offences committed by any person, institution or group of people are prosecuted				Poor			
		1.4.3 All forms of timber rights are allocated in compliance with relevant legislation				Poor			
	1.5 Stakeholder rights are respected and enforced.	1.5.1 Farmers right of consent for the allocation of timber right is fully respected			satisfactory			3	0.08
		1.5.2 Communities benefit from forest revenues allocated to traditional authorities (as fiduciaries) including SRAs			satisfactory				
		1.5.3 Farmer right to compensation payment for on-farm logging is respected				Poor			

Areas to be impacted	Criteria	Indicators	stakeholders Assessment (2015)					Good Governance Indicator (2015)	Standard Deviation
			Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Poor (2)	Very poor (1)		
	1.6 Minimal interference of higher level authorities over lower-level functional units.	1.6.1 district-level and field staff can exercise greater autonomy within their mandates in their daily functions				Poor		2	0.09
		1.6.2 progressive reduction of political interference in the sector at district and corporate levels of decision-making			Satisfactory				
2 Effectiveness of stakeholder representation, consultation and participation	2.1 stakeholder engagement arrangement in place.	2.1.1 An existing arrangement towards stakeholder engagement is adequately implemented			satisfactory			3	0.03
		2.1.2 There exist multi-stakeholder consultative platforms at district and national levels			satisfactory				
	2.2 Stakeholders have access to consultative processes.	2.2.1 Decision-making processes requiring consultation are publicly announced		Good				4	0.01
		2.2.2 Consultative platforms are largely open and equal right of participation is respected		Good					

Areas to be impacted	Criteria	Indicators	stakeholders Assessment (2015)					Good Governance Indicator (2015)	Standard Deviation
			Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Poor (2)	Very poor (1)		
	2.3 Stakeholder representatives are responsive and accountable to their constituents.	2.3.1 Representatives positions are fairly shared and owned by their group					Very Poor	1	0.09
		2.3.2 Stakeholder groups have clear feedback and reporting mechanisms				Poor			
		2.3.3 Stakeholders have reward/sanction mechanisms for accountability					Very poor		
	2.4 Effective coordination among and within sector institutions.	2.4.1 institutional structures that ensure cooperation between and among programmes and projects within the FC exist and functioning			satisfactory			3	0.07
		2.4.2 institutional structures that ensure cooperation between and among agencies within the FC exist and functioning			satisfactory				
		2.4.3 institutional structures that ensure cooperation between FC and relevant agencies and ministries exist and functioning			satisfactory				

Areas to be impacted	Criteria	Indicators	stakeholders Assessment (2015)					Good Governance Indicator (2015)	Standard Deviation
			Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Poor (2)	Very poor (1)		
3 Improvement of transparency and accountability in the forest sector	3.1 Procedures to obtain information are clear and accessible to stakeholders and the public.	3.1.1 Stakeholders and the public know where and how to obtain forestry-related information	Very good					5	0.01
		3.1.2 Communities and women have the requisite capacity to access information.	Very Good						
		3.1.3 CRMC and CREMAs are better strengthened to play their collaborative roles	Very Good						
	3.2 Transparency in the computation and collection of forest revenue.	3.2.1 Expected and collected revenue can be independently validated by third parties			Satisfactory			3	0.04
	3.3 Improved accountability in the distribution of forest revenue.	3.3.1 Beneficiaries know how much revenue is collected and their share					Very Poor	2	0.09
		3.3.2 There is evidence of what revenue from royalties and SRAs have been used for at the District, traditional council and community-level			Satisfactory				
	3.4 Existence of a clear and accessible redress mechanisms for grievances	3.4.1 There is a dispute resolution mechanism to address forest disputes on the ground					Very Poor	1	0.03

Areas to be impacted	Criteria	Indicators	stakeholders Assessment (2015)					Good Governance Indicator (2015)	Standard Deviation
			Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Poor (2)	Very poor (1)		
		3.4.2 The Dispute resolution mechanism (DRM) is known and accessible to all forest stakeholders					Very Poor		
	3.5 Public perception about rent-seeking and corruption behaviour in the sector.	3.5.1 Rating of stakeholder perception about corrupt behaviour of the timber industry in the application for timber rights and their forest-level operations					Very Poor	1	0.01
		3.5.2 Rating of stakeholder perception about corrupt behaviour of the law enforcement agencies in their dealing with illegal operators					Very Poor		
		3.5.3 Rating of stakeholder perception about corrupt behaviour of forestry officials in timber rights allocation and forest-level operations					Very Poor		
OVERALL IMPACT ASSESSMENT							2.5	0.03	

DISCUSSIONS ON THE CRITERIA AND INDICATORS

Impact area 1: Law Enforcement

Generally, law enforcement in the forestry sector is weak, particularly related to curbing illegal logging and chainsaw milling and trade (Marfo, 2010³). Recent studies of the sector suggest that, generally, the status of the adequacy of laws and regulations, institutional arrangements and stakeholder consultation in the sector were judged to be sufficient but needs improvement. Even though the status of laws and regulations governing the sector was considered sufficient, there are still significant gaps with respect to the regulation regime for off-reserve management. From the baseline survey assessment, stakeholders rated law enforcement at 2.6 on a scale of 5. This further confirms the weak enforcement of the laws in the sector.

The assessment of the criteria used to measure the impact area of the law enforcement is described below.

Clarity and coherence of forest laws

Generally, over 50% of national experts perceived that Ghana has not made significant progress in clarifying and harmonising forest laws although 80% agreed that the public has readily access to information on forestry laws. Thus, overall score was satisfactory

Effectiveness of law enforcement

While about 20% of national experts were not sure about the effectiveness of law enforcement in general, at least 47% were definite that law enforcement is ineffective. About 30% perceived that law enforcement is effective. In 5 areas, majority of experts viewed law enforcement as ineffective, reserve management planning (60%), fulfilment of fiscal (tax and fees) obligations (60%), land and tree ownership/tenure (46%), allocation of timber rights (56%) and harvesting operations (66%). The areas that majority of those who were definite about their assessment could indicate that law enforcement has been quite effective are trade regulation (44%), processing of timber by industry (50%) and transportation of timber (46%). The overall score is poor.

Prosecution of offences

In 15% of the cases, criminal forest offences were never reported to the police for prosecution. It was only 3% in the studied cases did officers report that all offences were reported to the police. In about 43% of the cases, up to half of offences were reported to the police and in about 38%, up to three-quarters of offences were reported to the police. These suggest that majority

³ Marfo, E. (2010). Chainsaw milling in Ghana, context, drivers and impacts. Tropenbos International.

of criminal offence cases at the district level are not reported to the police for prosecution. The overall score is poor.

Respect for farmer rights

Generally, compliance with laws affecting farmer's rights was found to be weak. For example, only 33% of farmers indicated that their right of consent before logging on their farms were carried out was respected. Even with that, the compliance in terms of consent in writing was very weak as in 94% of the cases where consent was sought, it was done verbally.

In terms of compensation payment, 55% of farmers indicated that they have had problems with compensation payment for crop damages on their farms. Even with those who had no problems, 63% indicated that the compensation paid was inadequate. Even though about a third of key community-level stakeholders and informants could not make an assessment, at least 40% and 48% were definite that compensation payments are quite low, thus corroborating the information given by the farmers themselves. The overall score is poor.

Institutional arrangements

About 63% of national experts agreed that the Timber Validation Department has been established and functioning well, yet only 12% agreed that it is autonomous. Thus, the overall score is satisfactory.

Compliance to regulations by timber contractors

The level of perceived compliance of timber contractors to regulations as assessed by district level forest officers was very impressive, except for compliance with environmental, health and safety regulations. The survey revealed that 85% of officers ranked compliance quite to very high in other areas such as logging manual, tax obligation, SRAs and transportation of timber. The overall score thus reduces to 'good' due to the generally unsatisfactory responses from some important areas.

Impact area 2: Stakeholder engagement and participation

For the past two decades, collaborative forest management has been promoted, increasing the participation of stakeholders, particularly local communities and civil society groups in forest management and policy processes. Under the 1994 Forest and Wildlife Policy, Ghana made a commitment towards collaborative forest management. In the spirit of that, several efforts emerged and indeed continue to emerge to ensure that greater stakeholder involvement and collaboration is integrated into sector programmes. The 2012 Forest and Wildlife policy even contains firmer commitments towards multi-stakeholder engagements towards sustainable forest management. The 2012 Forest and Wildlife Policy espouses a number of authoritative principles that suggest recognition of multi-stakeholder dialogue process as a desired culture of

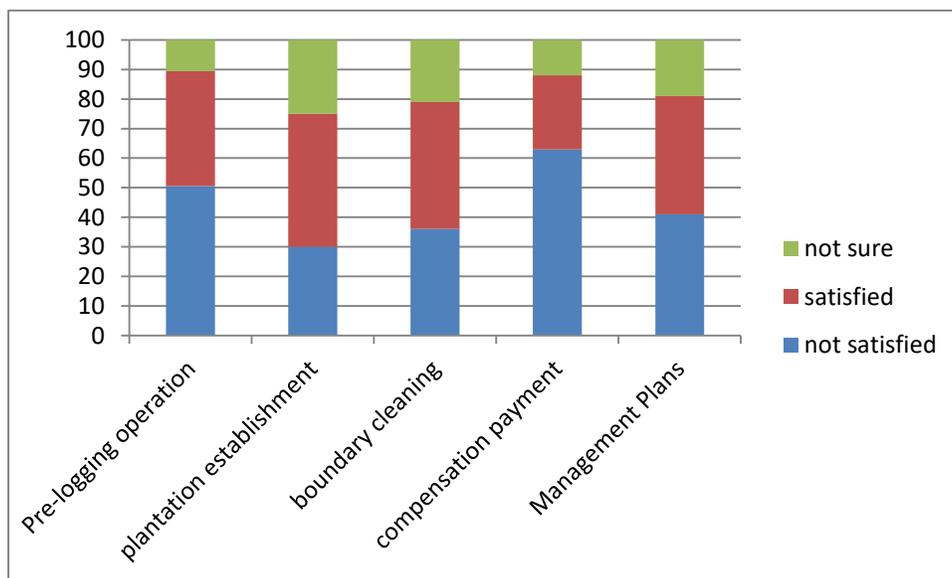
deliberating and prescribing forest policy proposals. These provide a normative supporting framework for a Mun-stakeholder dialogue (MSD) institutionalisation process to proceed. At the community level, the Collaborative Resource Management Committees (formerly known as community forest committees) have emerged and to a large extent institutionalized. Increasingly multi-stakeholder dialogue and consultation process is being institutionalized. Particularly, the on-going efforts to harmonize different multi-stakeholder dialogue processes and institutionalize them will enhance the democratization of the forestry sector. The Forest Forum is maturing and gaining recognition as a credible consultation platform across the district, regional and national scales of forest decision making

From the survey, stakeholder rated stakeholder’s engagement in the VPA at 2.8 on a scale of 5 indicating a relatively better governance indicator. The detailed rating of the criteria for stakeholder engagement is described below .

Perceived level of stakeholder engagement

56% of national experts thought that the level of stakeholder engagement in the sector is effective though about a third of them could not make an assessment. Only 13% were explicit that engagement in ineffective. Moreover, about 25% of experts thought that stakeholder engagement has not been well integrated into the reporting system but about 45% disagreed. Again, about 30% of them could not provide an assessment on this. However, stakeholder assessment of the level of satisfaction about consultation at the community-level leaves much to be desired, especially in the areas of pre-logging operation, compensation payment and management plan preparations.

Figure 1: Proportion of community-level informants about their perceived level of satisfaction of the consultation of FC with communities in various operational area (N=205)



The overall score is satisfactory since even though experts rank is good but district-level stakeholders' positive assessment is generally poor.

Openness of stakeholder engagement processes

At least 70% of national experts agreed that the level of stakeholder consultation by the FC in the past five years has been very open and accommodative to diverse views. At least 74% of district-level informants agreed that stakeholder consultation by the FC at the district has been very open and accommodative to diverse views. Only 13% disagreed and another 13% could not make an assessment. Assessing transparency of the engagement process in terms of adequacy of notification was conducted in terms of stakeholder perception. About 40% of district-level informants thought that the FC gives sufficient notice to the public about issues requiring their consultation while 30% thought otherwise and about 25% could not provide a definite answer. At least 69% of community-level informants agreed that the FC has at least somehow given them adequate notice of their consultation processes.

With respect to time they perceive as adequate notification, at least 70% of community-level and 76% of district-level informants indicated a range of between 7 days and 2 weeks. With regards to frequency of consultation, About 50% of district-level informants did not find the frequency of consultation of FC with district stakeholders adequate. Only 32% were satisfied with this and about 12% could not make an assessment. Thus the overall score assigned here is good.

Accountability of stakeholder representatives

Only 14% of national experts were definite about their knowledge of the existence of reward/sanction mechanism for the accountability of their stakeholder representatives. Only 30% of district-level informants were also aware of the existence of any reward/sanction mechanism for accountability of their representatives; the others did not know or were not sure. At least 70% of national experts found the accountability measures within their stakeholder groups inadequate. Only 40% of district-level informants found these measures adequate within their stakeholder groups. At least 75% of district-level informants agreed that stakeholders' representatives at the district are accountable to their constituents. Thus, on the basis of perception of accountability within national experts and district-level respondents' own stakeholder groups, accountability is ranked very poor.

Responsiveness of representatives

With respect to responsiveness, on a scale of 1-10, about 30% of district-level informants judged stakeholder representatives to be least responsive (rank 1 alone), another 35% in the middle ranks (5 to 7) and about 30% in the higher ranks of responsiveness (rank 8-10). This observation

is somehow in contrast to the assessment made by national experts who ranked district level stakeholder representatives from 3 to 7. Given that responsiveness should be assessed from below, more weight should be given to the assessment by district-level informants, suggesting that responsiveness is somehow satisfactory since at least 70% had given a positive ranking. It suggests that responsiveness needs to improve on the ground.

Impact area 3: Transparency and Accountability

Forest discourse and a number of studies have raised issues that are broadly related to the governance principles of transparency and accountability in Ghana. The particular areas mentioned are access to information, forest benefit sharing (revenue computation, collection and distribution) including SRAs (Marfo 2004⁴; Opoku, 2006⁵; Ayine, 2008⁶, high perception of corruption and rent-seeking behaviour in the sector (Adam et al. 2007⁷), and conflict (Marfo 2006⁸). Many challenges remain to ensuring that the VPA with the European Union is implemented transparently, not least that an assessment in 2012 showed that the majority of documents and data necessary for the legality assurance system are not public.

The forestry sector is also characterized by conflicts, particularly those related to tree tenure, benefit sharing/distribution especially related to compensation payments and Social Responsibility Agreement benefits and land boundaries (Marfo, 2006; Derkyi, 2012⁹). Litigation in the courts and mediation remain the main dispute resolution options, though formal dispute settlement procedures are generally lacking within the forest service. This is a critical context for the implementation of VPA and REDD+ as questions of carbon rights, tree tenure rights and

⁴ Marfo, E. 2004b, Unpacking and repacking community representation in forest policy and management negotiations: Lessons from the Social Responsibility Agreement in Ghana. *Ghana Journal of Forestry* 15&16, 20-29.

⁵ Opoku, K. 2006. Forest Governance in Ghana: an NGO perspective. Report produced for FERN by Forest Watch Ghana, March 2006.

⁶ Ayine, A.D. 2008. Developing Social Responsibility Agreements in Ghana's Forestry Sector. Legal Tools for Citizen Empowerment Series. London: International Institute for Environment and Development.

⁷ Adam, K. A., Pinard, M. A. Cobinnh, J.R. Damnyag, L. Nutakor, E. Nketiah K.S. Kyere B. Nyarko, C. and Marfo E (2007). corruption in the chainsaw milling and lumber trade in Ghana. *Chainsaw milling and lumber trade in West Africa Report No. 2. FORIG/TBI/University of Aberdeen.*

⁸ Marfo, E., 2006. *Powerful Relations: The role of actor-empowerment in the management of natural resources conflicts. A case of forest conflicts in Ghana.* PHD thesis Wageningen University, Wageningen, The Netherlands.

⁹ Derkyi, A.A. Mercy. 2012. Fighting over forest: interactive governance of conflicts over forest and tree resources in Ghana's high forest zone. *African Studies Collection vol. 41, 318pp.*

beneficiary rights remain largely unanswered. In the context of the VPA, issues of offence, compliance and sanctions within the framework of law enforcement will be very critical.

From the survey, the stakeholders rated transparency and accountability at 2.4 on the scale of 5. This confirms weak transparency and accountability in the forestry sector. The impact criteria are discussed below.

Openness of forest sector actors to sharing information with Researchers

Figure 2: Level of openness of all interviewed people in the various respondent categories (N= 1135)

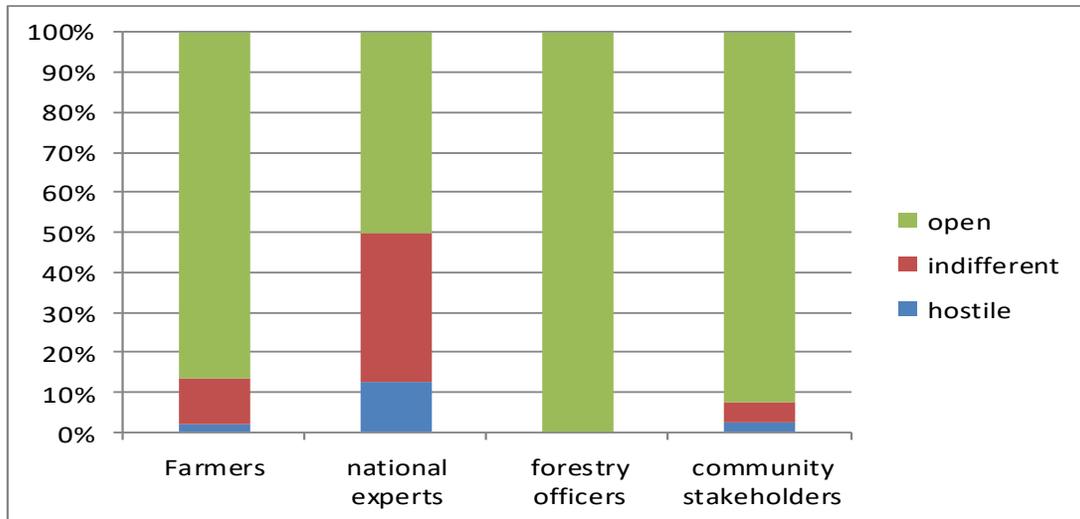


Figure 2: Chart showing the

Generally, stakeholders in the sector were found to be relatively friendly and open to researchers for information. Relatively, about 10% of national experts were found to be quite hostile with almost 40% found to be somehow indifferent (see figure 2).

Based on an evaluation conducted by researchers with respect to search for information on district forest offence files, records of types of timber rights holding as of 2014 and request for information about forest revenue and their sources from the District FSD office, figure 3 shows the extent to which information access was possible and prompt.

Figure 3: Percentage proportion of assessment category by researchers about the ease and promptness of access to information from district forest officials studied

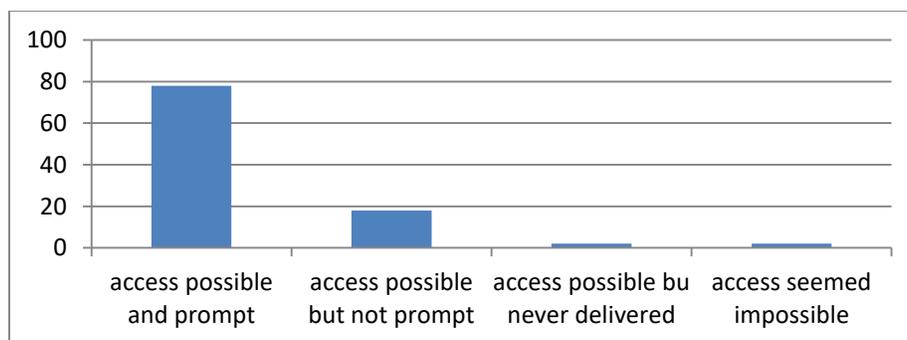
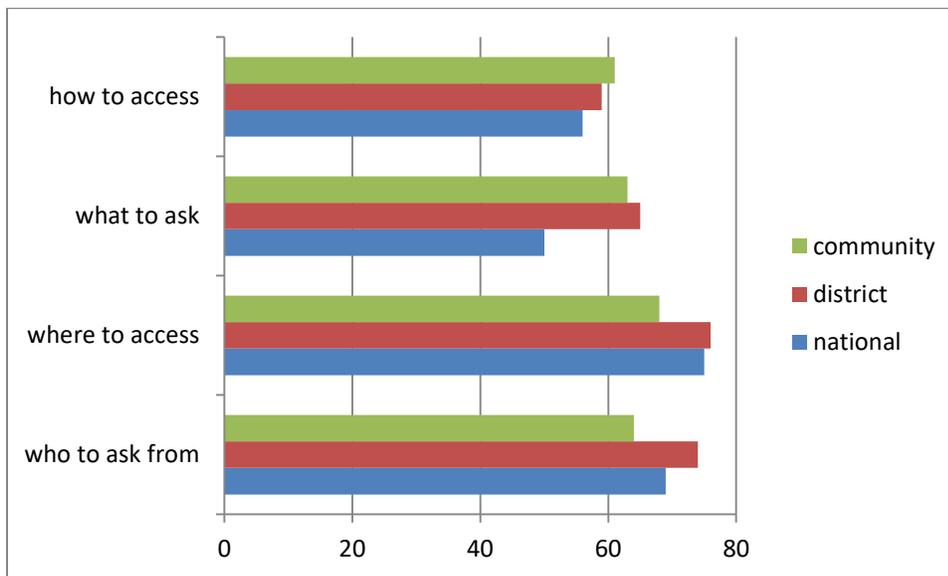


Figure 3 shows that in 80% of the cases accessing the required information from the district forest office were possible and prompt based on researchers' experience. Indeed, in 95% of the cases, the researchers could obtain the required information within a day. Based on researchers' observation, in about 62% of the cases, almost all the search information was also available to the public, in 19% of the cases, up to about half of the information was available and in about another 19% of the cases, none of the information was available to the public. Thus, a ranking of very good could be assigned to this area of assessment.

Knowledge about information access

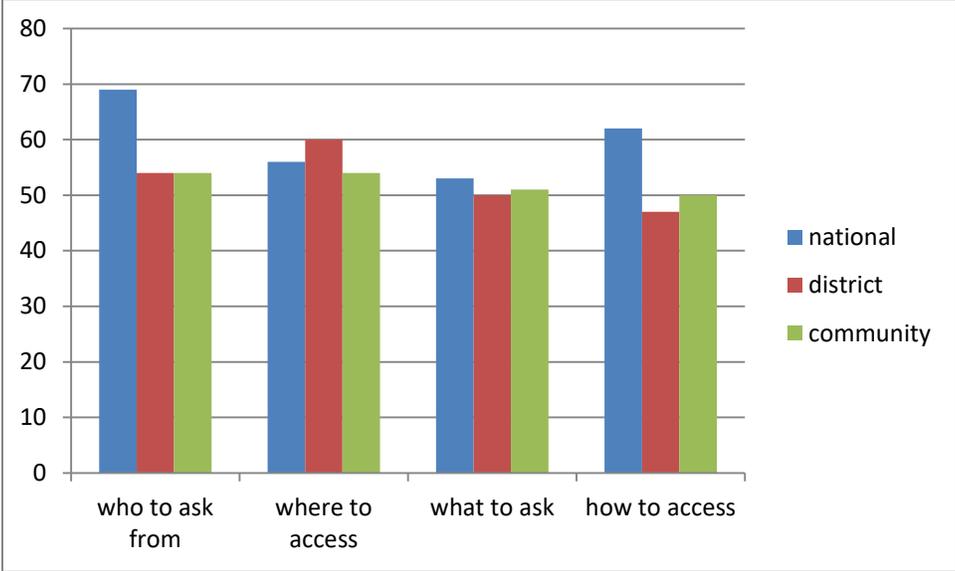
65% of national experts were of the view that stakeholders know who to access relevant information from. Generally, over 50% of informants from community to national level perceived that forestry stakeholders have sufficient knowledge about how to access information, who to ask, where and what to ask (figure 4).

Figure 4: Summary of the percentage proportion of community, district and national level informants and their perceived assessment of stakeholder knowledge to access relevant information in the forestry sector.



In relation to women, the trend in terms of informants' perception about stakeholders' knowledge about what, where, how and who to access information does not seem different. Generally majority of informants interviewed across communities, districts and national levels were positive (see figure 5). The only exception is that majority of district level informants did not think that women have adequate knowledge about how to access forestry information. Even though the general perception on access is ranked good, the unsatisfactory assessment with respect to women is negative and should reduce the overall score to satisfactory.

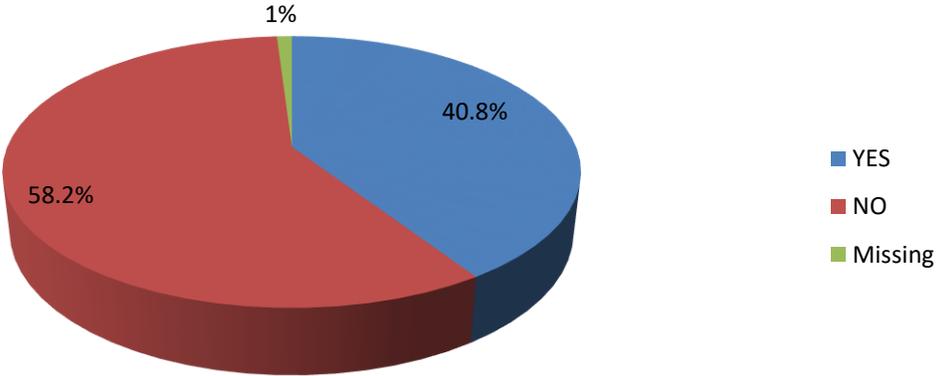
Figure 5: Proportion of respondents at various levels of study and their perception about access to information in the forestry sector



Information sharing with farmers

With respect to education of farmers about forestry laws in terms of SRA procedures and their rights, majority of farmers interviewed (about 59%) said they had never been educated.

Figure 6: Proportion of farmers interviewed who responded to question about whether they had ever been educated about forestry laws and their rights (N= 795)

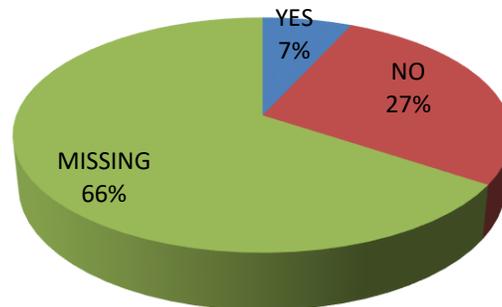


Therefore, the overall assessment of transparency in information sharing to farmers is that it is poor hence forestry extension need to be taken more serious.

Access to dispute resolution procedures

When asked about their experiences with forestry-related conflict, only 30% of farmers studied indicated that they had ever been involved in a forestry-related conflict.

Figure 7: Farmers who responded to whether they attempted to involve forestry officials in managing conflicts (N=794)



However, only 34% of farmers studied could give a categorical answer as to whether they involved forestry officials or not in managing the conflict (figure 7.) and only 20% of them had attempted to manage the conflict by involving forestry officials. Only 24% of those who involved indicated that they were satisfied with over 70% of them expressing dissatisfaction with respect to involving forestry officials. Even with this, 67% of farmers indicated that accessibility to conflict management intervention is difficult. This suggest that most of the farmer-related conflicts that occur at community level do not reach forestry officials and that generally local stakeholders do not find their intervention satisfactory. Meanwhile, about half of district forestry officials thought their procedures for managing conflicts were adequate.

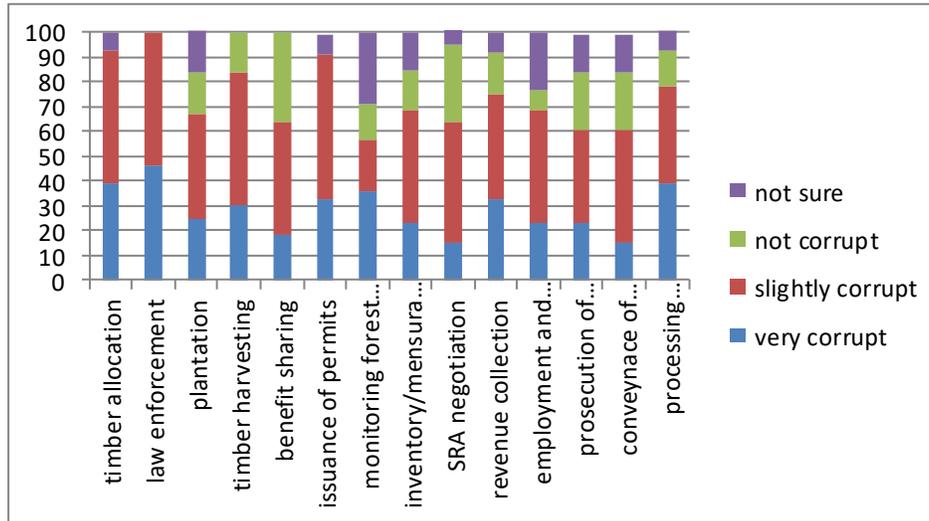
98% of district forestry officials indicated that they do not have any dispute resolution procedures for managing forest conflicts in their districts. Not surprisingly, on the average, 66% of farmers, community and district level forestry stakeholders studied indicated that they do not have any knowledge about any dispute resolution procedures.

87% of studied forest district officials indicated that they have records of forest related infractions, encroachment and illegalities while about 51% answered 'yes' to keeping records on forest complaints and conflicts. Therefore, the overall scoring for this assessment area is 'very poor' given the extremely low positive perception about access to dispute resolution procedures and level of satisfaction with conflict management interventions experienced.

Corruption

Corruption has been assessed mainly using the perception of national experts about the extent of corruption in 14 operational areas (see figure 8)

Figure 8: The perception of national experts about the level of corruption in 14 operational areas (N=17)



Generally, on the perceived level of corruption in the sector, at least 70% of experts indicated some level of corruption. Only an average of about 10% of experts could not make an assessment of corruption and only 15% on the average could be explicit to indicate no corruption in the various operational areas. This gives a poor ranking to corruption from experts opinion.

The level of negative influence from colleagues and superiors as assessed by district forestry officials was generally low. Only 15% confirmed that they experience such negative influences and even then, at least in 70% of the cases, the influence was perceived to be minimal.

However, the level of negative influence experienced by officers from political and traditional leaders was quite significant. 80% of studied district forestry officers answered 'yes' to experiences of negative influence from these leaders. The most significant area of influence has been prosecution of offences (78%); otherwise in all other areas such as forest protection, revenue collection, issuance of permit and yield allocation, their influence has been perceived to be minimal. Thus, based on experiential perception by district level officers, a rank of very poor can be assigned. Therefore, the overall score on corruption, on the basis of national experts' view and district level officers' experience is very poor.

3.0 CONCLUSION

The study sought to provide a baseline for monitoring VPA impact on forest governance and livelihood. To do this required the formulation of impact areas and criteria and indicators of impact. This study, using the construction of grand narrative of forest governance issues in Ghana developed an impact matrix consisting of criteria and indicators for three critical impact areas, law enforcement, stakeholder consultation and participation and transparency and accountability. This to a large extent was validated by experts and key VPA stakeholders.

An empirical study to obtain data for a baseline assessment of important impact areas was conducted within a period of two months using 20 trained field researchers to employ desk study, survey and informant interviews in six selected forest regions of Ghana. In all, over 1500 people were interviewed from community to national level. The study is highly relevant as it provides a solid bases for further studies to improve both the methodology and data quality as well as providing at least a scientifically-established baseline scenario for further monitoring governance impacts. It must be noted that the indicators used to design the research could change from time to time due to changing context of policy priority, gains made in particular impact areas.

A number of major conclusions from the study can be drawn, bearing in mind that the results are mainly based on a perception study. First, the study suggests that the forestry sector stakeholders are very much open to providing information to researchers, providing opportunity for the promotion of good governance in the sector. Second, in terms of level of stakeholder engagement, the openness of the engagement processes to other non-state stakeholders and level of knowledge of these stakeholders about how to access relevant information, the baseline situation is generally good. Third, the baseline situation is satisfactory for areas such as progress made in providing clear and coherent sector laws, establishing institutions for implementing VPA and the perceived responsiveness of stakeholder representatives in the engagement processes. Fourth, notwithstanding the above, there are important areas that the baseline situation is quite poor. These include law enforcement and prosecution of offences, respect for farmer rights, accountability of stakeholder representatives in consultative processes, access to clear dispute resolution procedures and forestry extension to disseminate information on relevant laws to farmers.

The study has developed a graphical matrix depicting the baseline assessment position of each of the fifteen important areas studied and has estimated the baseline index for good governance for Ghana to be 2.6. This suggests that even though Ghana has made some progress as of 2015, there is much room for improvement, particularly in the areas that score poor to satisfactory.

The baseline assessment and outcomes should be made to inform a revision to help establish solid bases for impact monitoring assessment. More substantively, efforts to improve law enforcement, establish a dispute resolution mechanism especially at forest management level, improve forest extension and education on farmer rights and to improve democratic representation in stakeholder consultation processes in the sector are urgent governance issues.

Moving forward, steps should be taken to institutionalise continuous data collection by civil society, the VPA Team and the Forestry Commission in order to facilitate easy monitoring of progress being made in specific governance impact areas. Therefore, standardizing the methodology and developing a protocol which can be used by relevant institutions becomes a critical follow-up assignment.

Guidelines for establishing baselines for VPA monitoring change

Introduction

The implementation of the VPA may cause multiple impacts in the VPA countries. It is therefore important to monitor the impacts of the VPAs in both the EU and the VPA countries to monitor the impacts of the programme on forest sector stakeholders, including forest-based industries in the EU and wood-producing countries, and governments and local communities in wood-producing countries

The process of developing the guidelines is an adaptive collaborative management is informed by the desires and perceptions of all major stakeholders affected by the VPA. Steps in the adaptive collaborative process include:

- establishing a baseline,
- developing an action strategy for change,
- selecting indicators for tracking progress toward realizing desired outcomes described in the strategy,
- monitoring and learning how the VPA is progressing toward the desired outcomes (goals), and
- adapting the management strategy to reflect changes in the implementation of the VPA

Preparing for a Baseline Assessment

The baseline assessment is to provide stakeholders with information about the current state of the VPA implementation which can be used as a basis for setting goals and developing new strategies. It also serves as the initial data set for landscape performance indicators which you can compare with subsequent performance indicators to assess how the VPA is changing the forest governance system

The first step in preparing to conduct a baseline assessment is to clearly identify the landscape and its boundaries. If possible, create or reference a map of the region so that you, the stakeholders will have a common understanding about the region of interest. Speak with your survey team and identifiable stakeholders ahead of time to discuss the tools to be used and the information to be gathered in the baseline assessments. It is important to keep the baseline exercise clear and concise, and to gather strategically selected information from a cross-section of stakeholders from the project landscape.

Depending on the interest the baseline can cover governance, transparency, accountability livelihoods, social structure particularly political characteristics of the project landscape, and stakeholder' goals for the landscape.

This baseline exercise gathers information on the status of the landscape as perceived by individuals and organizations living and working there, based on the set of indicators for impact areas being conceived under the project. The indicators should be developed through a process involving practioners and major stakeholders.

Selecting and Gathering Participants

VPA focus of people within the entire landscape, it is important to conduct a baseline that is representative of the entire landscape. It is best to contact and gather respected leaders, organizational directors, farmers and knowledgeable individuals from two or more communities within the landscape in a single forum. This way, the baseline assessment exercise can help communities within the landscape to develop or deepen a landscape perspective. There may be cases however, where the size of the landscape, or deep conflict between communities or stakeholders, make it difficult to gather all of the desired participants at one meeting.

When conducting a landscape -wide baseline in more than one community, or with different groups of stakeholders, through separate meetings it is important afterward to compare results among the different groups and note any differences. You will want to communicate results from groups among all of them. Consider also bringing selected representatives from each group

together to explore reasons for different results, and implications for developing landscape management strategies

Adapting a scorecard and conducting field

You will need to develop a scorecard to help you capture the perception of the stakeholders. This may have to be translated into the language(s) spoken by the participating stakeholders. If it seems appropriate, you could also have a translator present at the survey exercise rather than translate all of the materials; however it is recommended to translate the materials as the assessment will be repeated at least every year. It is especially important that the descriptions of the indicators make sense for the people in the landscape. You may use different approaches to gather the information. This may include focus group discussion, expert meetings, stakeholder consultative workshop and one-on-one discussions. Your survey team members must be conversant with these modes of data collection.

Managing Results and Documentation

Review the instructions for using the data capture form provided on the second tab of the excel spreadsheet or using SPSS. It is important to save a copy of the data capture form after each exercise with the name of the landscape, stakeholders and the data. Assess the capacity of the survey team to manage and preserve digital information. Develop a digital and physical file for all documents related to the landscape.

Some of the language and formulas used in the data capture form may be confusing to the stakeholders. Explain that the standard deviation measures how spread apart the group's answers were. The smaller the standard deviation, the closer the group is to reaching a consensus on the status of their landscape. Likewise, agreement also is indicated by upper and lower third values that are close to the average.

Working Toward A Baseline Data

1. Interpret the results of the scoring exercise – are there areas of consensus or areas where clear differences or challenges have emerged? Identify areas of relative strength, and areas of weakness which need to be addressed, as a basis for developing your data. Discuss how things have changed temporally and the drivers associated with these changes.
2. Consider underlying issues that may be more difficult to see but which might be causing some of the more visible or apparent problems/issues. Facilitate discussion around these issues and about possible ways moving forward to address them. Do not expect agreement to emerge during the initial meeting. Plan on follow up meetings and possibly

other activities to build agreement toward a strategy. Emphasize the importance of a multi-objective strategy and the benefits of addressing more than one problem/issue at a time. Define complementary pathways to addressing issues – to gain support of multiple stakeholders.

3. Consult with the experts and practitioners in developing a model for capturing the data
4. Based on the framework derived, solicit data from the stakeholders to assess the current situation.
5. In the process of developing your framework, be sensitive to additional indicators that will help you track change under the VPA.

Monitoring Landscape Change

Your VPA impact monitoring framework should include repeated implementation of the scoring exercise at least once or twice a year, with appropriate time allowed for discussing and interpreting changes that the data reveal and adapting the landscape strategy accordingly. Pay attention to any seasonal differences that might affect responses, and try to perform the scoring exercise at the same time each year. The same style of meeting/forum can be used to generate data on other project-specific indicators. Consider developing a scoring tool that includes the additional, project-specific indicators you may want to track to support your adaptive collaborative approach to landscape management.

The model to be used to monitoring the change is shown in Appendix 1

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: VPA impact indicators, verifiers and potential sources of data

Indicators	Verifiers	Potential Data Source
1.1.1 The legislative framework governing (legal timber extraction and trade) is clearly defined	Consolidated and harmonised forest code	FC website FC legal unit
1.1.2 Laws are seen to be based on sound and coherent policy framework	Perception of key forest stakeholders	Interviews from stakeholders
1.2.1 A wood tracking system is in place and functioning	Copy of document outlining the wood tracking system Standard wood tracking information documents Independent auditing of the system	TVD office in Accra Timber inspection points District and national offices, ports, Audit reports
1.2.3 A dedicated agency or department for monitoring forest law compliance is in place and functioning	Office space, staff and operational logistics	FC

1.2.4 A Transparent verification process and procedures exist	Verification system audit Perception of FC clients	Manual of verification Stakeholder perception study reports
1.3.1 the Timber Verification Council exercises autonomy	Perception of TVD clients TVD staff and TVC members feel more confident about their growing autonomy	Interviews from TVD clients Interviews from TVD management and support staff and TVC members
1.3.2 TVD audits are conducted based on clear and verifiable protocols	Independent assessment of the clarity and verifiability of auditing protocols	Independent assessment of auditing protocol reports Interviews from TVD clients
1.3.3 Code of behaviour of verification staff clearly defined	Auditing of verification staff conduct Perception of clients	Code of behaviour interviews
1.3.4 Conflict of interest rules stated and codified	Independent assessment of adequacy of conflict of interest rules Perception of Clients	Conflict of interest rules document Interview of clients

<p>1.4.1 All timber right holding are in compliance with applicable laws</p>	<p>Contract letters converting concessions to TUCs</p> <p>Updated list of timber rights allocation</p> <p>Ratification by parliament</p>	<p>TREC secretariat, FSD head office</p>
<p>1.4.2 All cases of illegal logging, illegal agricultural activities, chainsaw operations and other forest offences committed by any person, institution or group of people are prosecuted</p>	<p>District forest offence files</p> <p>District report</p> <p>Court judgments</p>	<p>District FSDs</p> <p>Operations, FSD</p>
<p>1.4.3 All forms of timber rights are allocated in compliance with relevant legislation</p>	<p>Updated timber rights register</p>	<p>TREC, Executive Director-FSD</p>
<p>1.5.1 Farmers right of consent for the allocation of timber right is fully respected</p>	<p>Copies of consent letters at district forest office</p> <p>Confirmation from selected farmers</p>	<p>District Forest Office</p> <p>Selected farmers in logging areas</p>
<p>1.5.2 Communities benefit from forest revenues allocated to</p>	<p>Copies of negotiated SRAs</p> <p>Physical inspection of projects</p>	<p>Register of SRAs at TREC office</p>

traditional authorities (as fiduciaries) including SRAs		Town development committee/Assembly member District Assemblies
1.5.3 Farmer right to compensation payment for on-farm logging is respected		
2.1.1 A clear policy commitment towards stakeholder engagement by Government and national forestry authorities exists	National policy/ministerial statements Programme documents	2012 Forest and Wildlife Policy FC operational budget Programmes documents from FC website Programme budgets
2.1.2 An existing arrangement towards stakeholder engagement is adequately implemented	Implementation assessment studies Stakeholder perception about adequacy of engagement	Assessment reports/papers Stakeholder interviews
2.1.3 There exist multi-stakeholder consultative platforms at district and national levels (why not the community level as well?)	Minutes of previous meetings Allocated resources	Platform convenors (address and contacts) Platform budget
2.2.1 Decision-making processes requiring consultation are publicly announced		FC website

	<p>Notices of public announcement</p> <p>Invitation letters to stakeholders</p>	<p>Notices at national, regional and district offices, notice boards</p>
<p>2.2.2 Consultative platforms are largely open and equal right of participation is respected</p>	<p>Updated list of forest sector stakeholders at FC</p> <p>Independent observation of consultative meetings</p> <p>Academic reviews of minutes and procedures</p>	<p>FC website</p> <p>Academic papers</p> <p>Participant interviews</p>
<p>2.3.1 Representatives positions are fairly shared and owned by their Group</p>	<p>Periodic review of stakeholder positions and opinion of members on issues</p>	<p>Minutes of consultative and group meeting</p> <p>Perception studies</p>
<p>2.3.2 Stakeholder groups have clear feedback and reporting mechanisms</p>	<p>Copies of reporting standards</p> <p>No significant disagreements from group members</p> <p>Periodic review of stakeholder perceptions about feedback</p>	<p>Minutes of group members</p> <p>Perception studies</p>
<p>2.3.2 Stakeholders have reward/sanction mechanisms for accountability</p>	<p>Report on sanction/praise</p> <p>Copies of official reporting mechanism/standards</p>	<p>Group meetings</p> <p>Focus group discussion</p>

<p>3.1.1 Stakeholders and the public know where and how to obtain forestry-related information</p>	<p>Assessment of stakeholder knowledge level</p> <p>Verification of information sources</p>	<p>FC website, District offices</p> <p>Notices of where to get what information</p> <p>Random collection of information from advertised sources</p>
<p>3.1.2 Communities and women have the requisite capacity to access information</p>	<p>More targeted women and community members are able to assess forestry information</p> <p>Identify targeted communities and women</p> <p>Verify their capacity to assess information</p>	<p>Capacity building reports</p> <p>Capacity assessment study reports</p>
<p>3.1.3 Collaborative Resource Management Committees (CRMC) and Community Resource Management Committees (CREMA) are better strengthened to play their collaborative roles</p>	<p>Samples of targeted CRMCs and CREMAs show better capacity from baseline situation</p>	<p>Capacity building reports from FC/donors</p> <p>Performance review reports</p>
<p>3.2.1 Expected and collected revenue can be independently validated by third parties</p>	<p>FC invoices and receipts</p>	<p>District forest offices, corporate finance office</p>

3.3.1 Beneficiaries know how much revenue is collected and their share	Indicated revenue levels are comparable with officially declared levels	Stool land chiefs, paramount chiefs and DAs
3.3.2 There is evidence of what revenue from royalties and SRAs have been used for at the District, traditional council and community-level	Inspection of declared projects	Budgets Project reports
3.4.1 There is a dispute resolution mechanism to address forest disputes on the ground	Inspect copies of official DRM procedure document Stakeholder feel much satisfied about DRM	District, and other FC offices Offence file at district FSD offices Perception studies
3.4.2 The DRM is known and accessible to all forest stakeholders	Sampled stakeholder are able to point to the essential procedures	Perception studies report
3.5.1 Rating of stakeholder perception about corrupt behaviour of the timber industry in the application for timber rights and their forest-level operations	Higher ranking of perception of timber rights applicants from baseline situation	Corruption perception study reports
3.5.2 Rating of stakeholder perception about corrupt behaviour of the law enforcement agencies in their dealing with illegal operators	Higher ranking of perception of timber traders from baseline situation	Corruption perception study reports

3.5.3 Rating of stakeholder perception about corrupt behaviour of forestry officials in timber rights allocation and forest-level operations	Higher ranking of perception of timber traders and companies from baseline situation	Corruption perception study reports
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Appendix 2: Framework for VPA Impact Monitoring and Baseline Assessment

Areas to be impacted	Criteria	Indicators	Trends	stakeholders Assessment (YEAR)					Good Governance Indicator
				Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Poor (2)	Very poor (1)	
1. Improvement in law enforcement	1.1 Clear and coherent laws governing forest exist.	1.1.1 The legislative framework governing (legal timber extraction and trade) is clearly defined							
		1.1.2 Laws are seen to be based on sound and coherent policy framework							
	1.2 Institutional arrangement for monitoring forest law compliance exist.	1.2.1 A wood tracking system is in place and functioning							
		1.2.2 A dedicated agency or department for monitoring forest law compliance is in place and functioning							
		1.2.3 Transparent verification process and procedures exist							
	1.3 A dedicated agency exercises greater autonomy in its day to day functioning exercise autonomy.	1.3.1 the Timber Verification Council exercises autonomy							
		1.3.2 TVD audits are conducted based on clear and verifiable protocols							
		1.3.3 Code of behaviour of verification staff clearly defined							
		1.3.4 Conflict of interest rules stated and codified							
	1.4 Improved compliance of forest laws and regulations.	1.4.1 All timber right holding are in compliance with applicable laws							
		1.4.2 All cases of illegal logging, illegal agricultural activities, chainsaw operations and other forest offences committed by any							

Areas to be impacted	Criteria	Indicators	Trends	stakeholders Assessment (YEAR)					Good Governance Indicator
				Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Poor (2)	Very poor (1)	
		person, institution or group of people are prosecuted							
		1.4.3 All forms of timber rights are allocated in compliance with relevant legislation							
	1.5 Stakeholder rights are respected and enforced.	1.5.1 Farmers right of consent for the allocation of timber right is fully respected							
		1.5.2 Communities benefit from forest revenues allocated to traditional authorities (as fiduciaries) including SRAs							
		1.5.3 Farmer right to compensation payment for on-farm logging is respected							
	1.6 minimal interference of higher level authorities over lower-level functional units.	1.6.1 district-level and field staff can exercise greater autonomy within their mandates in their daily functions							
		1.6.2 progressive reduction of political interference in the sector at district and corporate levels of decision-making							
	2 Effectiveness of stakeholder representation, consultation and participation	2.1 stakeholder engagement arrangement in place.	2.1.1 An existing arrangement towards stakeholder engagement is adequately implemented						
2.1.2 There exist multi-stakeholder consultative platforms at district and national levels									
2.2 Stakeholders have access to consultative processes.		2.2.1 Decision-making processes requiring consultation are publicly announced							
		2.2.2 Consultative platforms are largely open and equal right of participation is respected							

Areas to be impacted	Criteria	Indicators	Trends	stakeholders Assessment (YEAR)					Good Governance Indicator
				Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Poor (2)	Very poor (1)	
	2.3 Stakeholder representatives are responsive and accountable to their constituents.	2.3.1 Representatives positions are fairly shared and owned by their group							
		2.3.2 Stakeholder groups have clear feedback and reporting mechanisms							
		2.3.3 Stakeholders have reward/sanction mechanisms for accountability							
	2.4 Effective coordination among and within sector institutions.	2.4.1 institutional structures that ensure cooperation between and among programmes and projects within the FC exist and functioning							
		2.4.2 institutional structures that ensure cooperation between and among agencies within the FC exist and functioning							
		2.4.3 institutional structures that ensure cooperation between FC and relevant agencies and ministries exist and functioning							
3 Improvement of transparency and accountability in the forest sector	3.1 Procedures to obtain information are clear and accessible to stakeholders and the public.	3.1.1 Stakeholders and the public know where and how to obtain forestry-related information							
		3.1.2 Communities and women have the requisite capacity to access information.							
		3.1.3 CRMC and CREMAs are better strengthened to play their collaborative roles							
	3.2 Transparency in the computation and collection of forest revenue.	3.2.1 Expected and collected revenue can be independently validated by third parties							

Areas to be impacted	Criteria	Indicators	Trends	stakeholders Assessment (YEAR)					Good Governance Indicator
				Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Poor (2)	Very poor (1)	
	3.3 Improved accountability in the distribution of forest revenue.	3.3.1 Beneficiaries know how much revenue is collected and their share							
		3.3.2 There is evidence of what revenue from royalties and SRAs have been used for at the District, traditional council and community-level							
	3.4 Existence of a clear and accessible redress mechanisms for grievances	3.4.1 There is a dispute resolution mechanism to address forest disputes on the ground							
		3.4.2 The Dispute resolution mechanism (DRM) is known and accessible to all forest stakeholders							
	3.5 Public perception about rent-seeking and corruption behaviour in the sector.	3.5.1 Rating of stakeholder perception about corrupt behaviour of the timber industry in the application for timber rights and their forest-level operations							
		3.5.2 Rating of stakeholder perception about corrupt behaviour of the law enforcement agencies in their dealing with illegal operators							
		3.5.3 Rating of stakeholder perception about corrupt behaviour of forestry officials in timber rights allocation and forest-level operations							
	OVERALL IMPACT ASSESSMENT								

TRENDS: ↑ steep upward trend ↗ slow/some increase → No change ↘ slow/some decrease ↓ steep downward

$GGI = \frac{(A_1 \times f_{R1}) + (A_2 \times f_{R2}) + (A_n \times f_{Rn})}{N}$ where GGI = good governance index: A_1 = numerical rank of assessment area 1 up to the nth assessment; f_R = the frequency of areas scored under respective ranks, $R_1, R_2 \dots R_n$; N = total number of assessment areas