

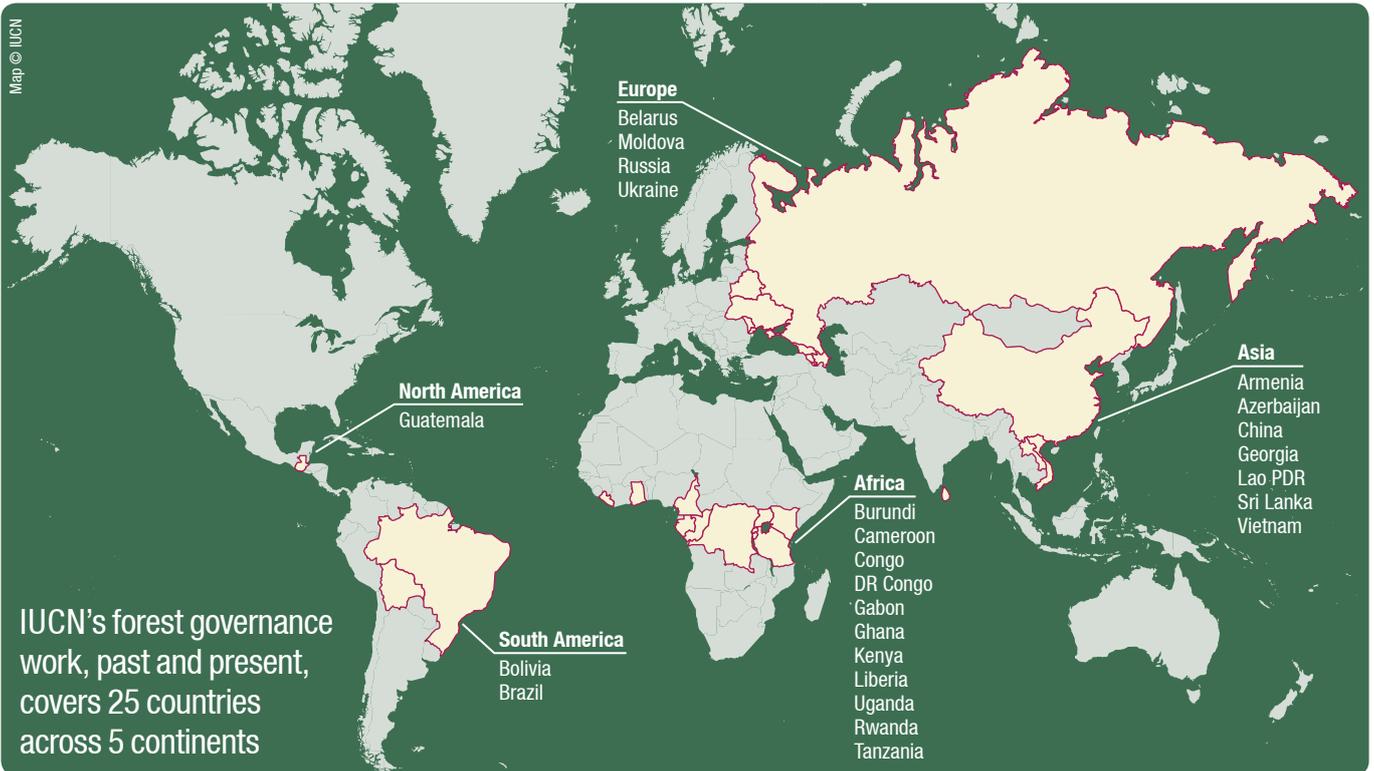


IUCN's role in forest governance reform processes

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The Lemba Forests, Kenya © Nicholas Ngece



THIS BRIEF PROVIDES AN OVERVIEW of the roles that IUCN can play in support of national and regional forest governance reform processes, particularly those that address illegal logging, its associated trade and other predatory practices. These processes include the regional ministerial conferences on Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG), and the national follow-up to these, and initiatives undertaken in the context of the European Union's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan, including Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) processes.

The implementation of IUCN's roles in any particular setting is based on a great deal of consultation with stakeholders. Implementation is adapted in accordance with the circumstances of each country and process, including specific local needs, the range of stakeholders and the existing relations between them. It will also respond to IUCN's membership in that country, whom IUCN works with and supports.

IUCN has 60 years of experience in working with government, civil society and the private sector to provide and enrich problem-solving platforms in which sensitive natural resource governance issues, such as illegal logging, can be dealt with in a positive and constructive manner.

IUCN's approach to forest governance reform

Our underlying conviction is that the management and conservation of a country's forest resources are a matter of informed societal choice. Without support from local stakeholder groups, implementation of forest governance reforms stands little chance of

being sustained. So it is important that these groups see each other, and see themselves, as partners in the identification and implementation of agreed forest governance actions.

IUCN's experiences have highlighted that within each of the broad groups of government, private sector and civil society stakeholders there are often a wide range of diverse interests. Results-driven consultation cannot be based on having a few individuals at the table at one event, but requires reaching out to and engaging key constituencies in an ongoing process.

The results IUCN is well-placed to deliver in forest governance reform processes are:

- 1 **Transparency and empowered stakeholders** who are aware of the means by which their interests in forest governance reform can be pursued and addressed.
- 2 **Space for building trust and common cause** so that priority actions can be identified and implemented collaboratively while bridging long-term conflictual situations.
- 3 **High-quality advice** that is based on practical experiences and sound technical inputs to provide a solid basis for decision-making and implementation.
- 4 **Piloting early action** by field testing, in cooperation with local partners and IUCN members, alternative legal and sustainable livelihood options for rural communities and others that could be included in forest governance reform agreements and plans.

AUTHORS

This brief was written by Carole Saint-Laurent with contributions from Stewart Maginnis, Guido Broekhoven and Matthew Markopoulos.

IUCN will work with governments and other stakeholders to design and facilitate multistakeholder processes that are associated with national or regional forest governance reform processes, where there is a need and general support for IUCN to do so. Depending on the situation, this can be as focused as acting as a trusted facilitator of one or more specific dialogue sessions, or as broad as designing, convening and carrying out a full stakeholder engagement and dialogue process that goes beyond specific meetings or may involve supporting our members in the delivery of an agreed programme of work.

IUCN will seek to keep these roles clear, distinct and well-understood by the stakeholders of the forest governance reform processes in which it participates. We have learned through our experiences in many countries that we need to continually explain and assess our role and how stakeholders perceive it. It is also important to maintain a watching brief on the dynamics of an unfolding forest governance stakeholder process, including the relations between the different stakeholders within it and the emergence of potential obstacles, and to adapt the process as necessary.

A menu of options

Where appropriate and in collaboration with governments and other stakeholders, IUCN may play one or more of the following roles in support of forest governance reform processes:

1 Transparency and empowered stakeholders

- ▶ *Improve information sharing:* Mechanisms and informal channels may be established or strengthened to provide different stakeholder groups with access to adequate information to support their participation throughout the forest governance reform process. As far as possible, a shared understanding will be sought of the roles of each participant in the process in providing information.
- ▶ *Support capacity building:* Where there is a recognized need, capacity building will be facilitated for government, civil society or the private sector, including on operating effective stakeholder processes and credible legality verification schemes and in support of effective participation by marginalized groups in forest governance reform.

2 Space for building trust and common cause

- ▶ *Design and provide advice on multistakeholder processes:* This can involve identification of stakeholders; analysis of the local context, needs and capacities; organization of meetings and media briefings, and other elements. It can also include providing advice on such matters as removing obstacles that

emerge during consultations, and on increasing the likelihood of stakeholder advice being taken into account.

- ▶ *Facilitate multistakeholder dialogue sessions:* Using generally recognized facilitation principles and tools, and drawing on the expertise of IUCN's Commission on Education and Communication, specific events forming part of a multistakeholder process (such as workshops and meetings) may be facilitated.

3 High-quality advice

- ▶ *Catalyze and/or develop high-quality technical input:* Different parties will be supported to collate, synthesize and present field-based policy learning. New and additional primary information will be produced where doing so would improve the quality of the dialogues.

4 Piloting early action

- ▶ *Identify and implement specific pilot actions:* Innovative governance approaches identified through multistakeholder deliberation processes will be field-tested in collaboration with local partners, particularly initiatives involving a range of state and non-state actors.

Looking forward

Besides the roles outlined above, and in recognition of IUCN's experiences to date, we have been encouraged by our advisers and partners to put greater emphasis on facilitating learning exchanges between our state and non-state members working on forest governance issues, and on organizing and bringing together cross-country and cross-regional learning networks to build and apply best practices for forest governance reform. ■

An example: Supporting VPA processes

In VPA processes, it is the role of the government to convene and give political legitimacy to the multistakeholder process established to support negotiations with the European Union. The government's role includes the selection of a facilitator. As with forest governance reform processes more generally, IUCN's role may be as focused as facilitating government-endorsed multistakeholder dialogue sessions, or as broad as designing multistakeholder processes that include official or informal dialogues as well as communications and other strategies, and supporting their implementation.

IUCN will offer its support as a trusted facilitator in a VPA-related government-sanctioned multistakeholder process where:

- ▶ Requested to do so and given a mandate by government.
- ▶ This role is acceptable to key elements of civil society and the private sector.
- ▶ This role is consistent with IUCN's role as a membership organization in the specific country context.

Because each VPA process is different, the roles played by IUCN and others need to be clearly defined in the specific national context, explained at the beginning of the process, and checked against perceptions throughout the consultation process.

RESOURCES

For more information on IUCN's forest governance programme, please visit our website at:

http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/forest/fp_our_work/fp_our_work_thematic/fp_our_work_flg/



**INTERNATIONAL UNION
FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE**

FOREST CONSERVATION PROGRAMME
Rue Mauverney 28
CH-1196 Gland
Switzerland
forest.governance@iucn.org
Tel +41 (22) 999-0261/3
Fax +41 (22) 364-9720
www.iucn.org/forest



District councillors and villagers review forest boundaries in Ruffiji, Tanzania © IUCN



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