

SNAPSHOT

REDD+-related forest governance in Cameroon

Introduction

This report summarises the Forest Governance Index (FGI) assessment of forest governance in Cameroon in the context of its REDD+ process (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries) from 2007 to 2022. Cameroon has a rich forest heritage, boasting diverse species and ecosystems. However, in recent years, it has faced significant challenges in managing its forests sustainably and effectively. To address these challenges, Cameroon is actively engaged in forest governance initiatives, including REDD+. Cameroon has been involved in international REDD+ negotiations since its inception. The first REDD+ pilot project in Cameroon took place in 2008 and the national multistakeholder REDD+ Steering Committee was set up in 2012. Multistakeholder participation, legislative reforms, and accountability mechanisms are key elements in Cameroon’s forest governance landscape, as assessed by the FGI.

The FGI assessment provides insights into the country’s forest governance regime, highlighting areas of strength and weaknesses. In engaging with the findings in each five areas of governance, stakeholders may consider the following questions:

1. Do you relate to the findings of the FGI assessment and why?
2. Which of these findings might you use and for what purposes?
3. Are there opportunities for improvement? What might constrain their realisation?
4. Should the FGI assessment be run again for all or some areas? If so, what would be the periodicity and process(es) to focus on?

Evolution of forest governance in Cameroon between 2007–2022



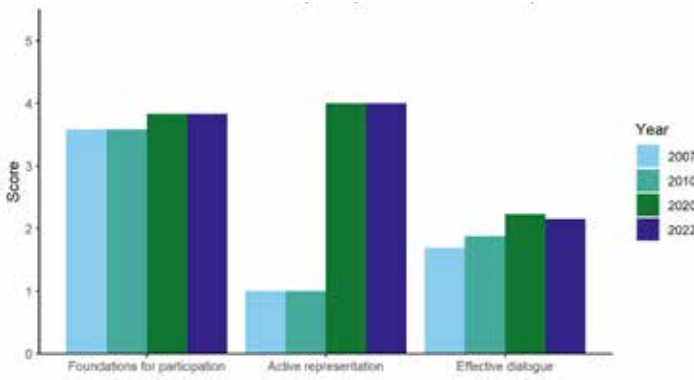
SCORES AND RECENT TRENDS

AREA OF GOVERNANCE	SCORE 2022	TREND 2020-22
Stakeholder participation	3.33	→
Legislative and institutional clarity	3.33	→
Accountability and oversight	2.44	→
Transparency	3.09	→
Compliance promotion and enforcement	3.27	→

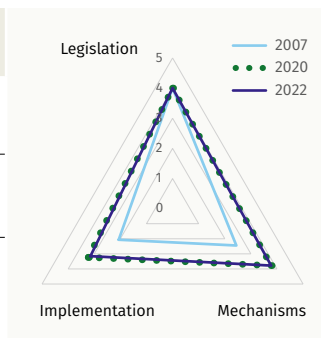
KEY

- ↑ Significantly improving
- ↗ Moderately improving
- No change
- ↘ Moderately decreasing
- ↓ Significantly decreasing

Stakeholder participation related to REDD+



BUILDING BLOCK	SCORE 2022	TREND 2020-22
Legislation	4.00	➔
Mechanisms for participation	3.78	➔
Implementation (breadth and frequency of dialogue)	3.15	➔



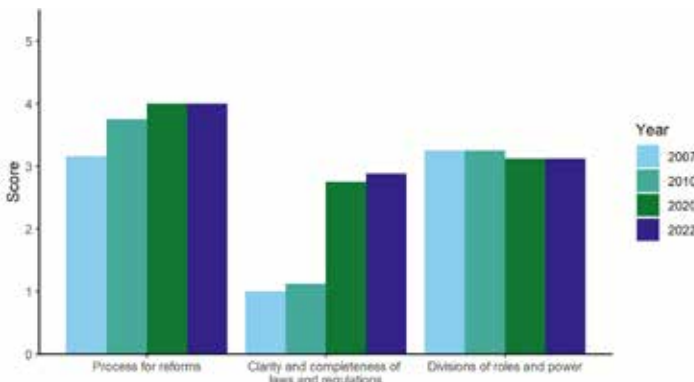
HIGHLIGHTS

- The **legal basis** for participation existed prior to 2007.
- A **mechanism** ensuring multistakeholder participation in the REDD+ process was established in 2012 (the REDD+ Steering Committee).
- The set-up and further implementation of mechanisms for participation are reflected in the strong improvement seen after 2010 in the **active representation** of stakeholders in the process.
- Indigenous peoples, civil society and the formal private sector have been represented on the REDD+ Steering Committee since 2012, but the informal private sector remains excluded.
- **Breadth and frequency of the dialogue** with stakeholders improved between 2007 and 2010, but has seen a slight decrease in 2022. This decline is due to the establishment of multistakeholder structures in the forest sector that do not include all stakeholders on all issues – and which has translated into lesser dialogue.

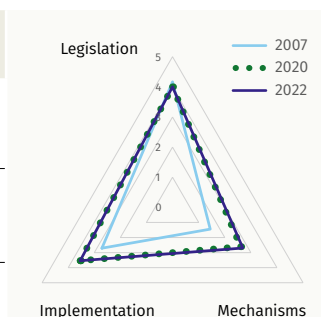
QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

What are the internal and external drivers for effective representation and dialogue with stakeholders? Are gains likely to be maintained?

Legislative and institutional clarity related to REDD+



BUILDING BLOCK	SCORE 2022	TREND 2020-22
Legislation	4.00	➔
Mechanisms for legal clarity and completeness	2.69	➔
Implementation	3.54	➔



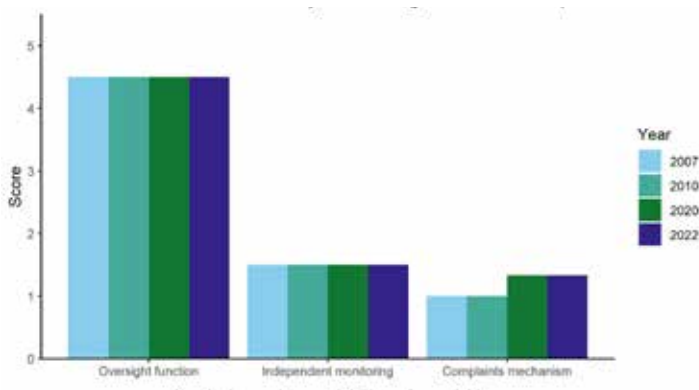
HIGHLIGHTS

- The **legal basis** existed for raising concerns about forest laws and regulations.
- Improvements seen in the process for **legal reforms** are attributed to the increased involvement of non-state actors in identifying areas for legal reforms, which were helped by the REDD+ process.
- The initial stages of the REDD+ process did not prioritise legal reform, but legal improvements took place in 2011 and beyond in various areas related to forests.
- Ongoing work is being carried out in many areas, including land-use planning, land allocation, forest use and management, and activities impacting the forest sector.
- There are some overlaps and conflicts in the **roles and powers** over land-use planning, land allocation and activities impacting forests.

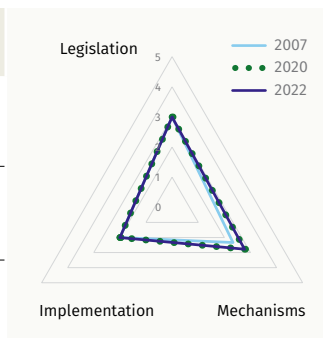
QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

How could the REDD+ process help address the challenges in land-use planning, land allocation, and activities impacting forests?

Accountability and oversight related to REDD+



BUILDING BLOCK	SCORE 2022	TREND 2020-22
Legislation	3.00	➔
Mechanisms for accountability	2.78	➔
Implementation	2.00	➔



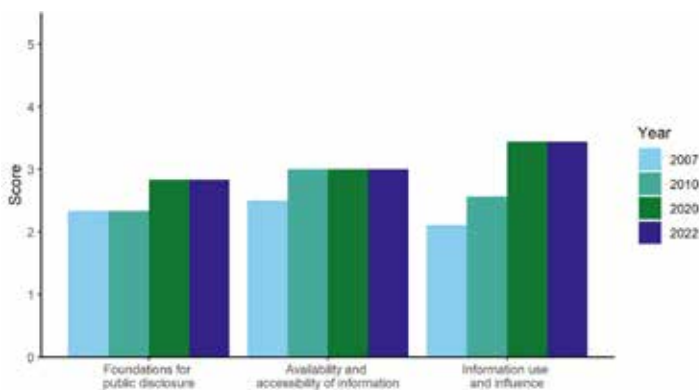
HIGHLIGHTS

- The General Inspectorate carries out the **oversight function** of government entities responsible for the management and control of forests. However, its reports are not public. No change was observed for this function throughout the assessment period.
- Although it is possible to operate as **independent monitor** of deforestation and forest degradation in Cameroon, such monitoring does not exist. Notwithstanding, Cameroonian civil society has developed a monitoring system and assessed one project, indicating the potential for independent monitoring to begin in the country – this small increment is not captured by the FGI scoring.
- Official complaint mechanisms** against government agencies and private operators do not exist in Cameroon nor are mandated by law. Minor improvements in this area in 2020 and 2022 reflect that, despite the lack of legal commitment, some work has been done to establish such a mechanism under the REDD+ process

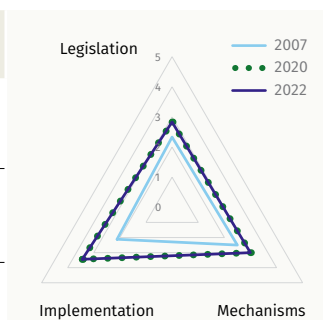
QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

- What** are the prospects of establishing and running an independent REDD+ monitor?
- How** could the use of complaint mechanisms be enhanced?

Transparency related to REDD+



BUILDING BLOCK	SCORE 2022	TREND 2020-22
Legislation	2.83	➔
Mechanisms to support transparency	3.00	➔
Implementation	2.78	➔



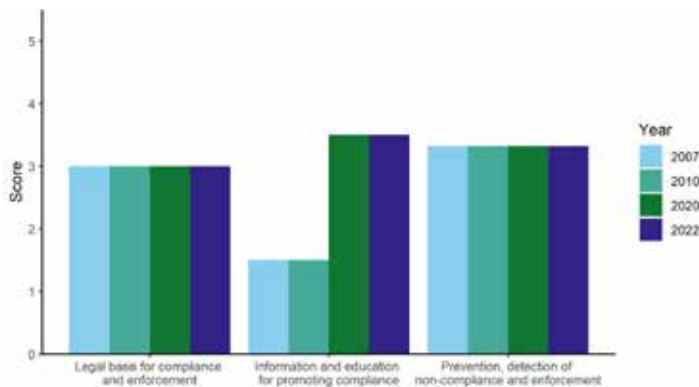
HIGHLIGHTS

- The **rights** to access certain forest information existed in 2007. Under the REDD+ process, government and non-state actors developed a practical guide for access to information to support stakeholders in understanding and implementing this right.
- There are no legal provisions specifying grounds for refusal to disclose information.
- Although **information became slightly more available** throughout the assessment period, government entities continue to delay the publication of information and do not consult stakeholders on which information they need.
- The **use and influence of information** increased constantly throughout the assessment period.
- Access to information** in certain areas, such as the forest allocation process, remains limited for many stakeholders. Despite shortcomings, the REDD+ process has contributed to improving forest stakeholders' understanding of forest laws and regulations.

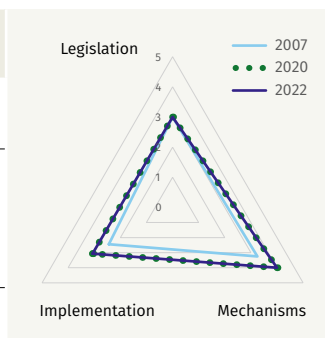
QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

- Which** aspect of transparency should be improved in priority and how: policies, the availability of information or its use by stakeholders?

Compliance promotion and enforcement related to forest areas



BUILDING BLOCK	SCORE 2022	TREND 2020-22
Legislation	3.00	→
Mechanisms to promote compliance and support detection and enforcement	4.00	→
Implementation	3.07	→



HIGHLIGHTS

- The **legal framework** contains provisions on the application of the law, but there have been minimal changes since 2007.
- **Mandates for addressing non-compliance** with land-use planning and land allocation are not clearly defined, while they are well-defined for forest use and management, payment of fees, environmental legislation, and third parties' rights to forests.
- The legal framework could better define the **type of response and penalties** for addressing non-compliance.
- The entry into force of the FLEGT VPA led to an increase in the availability of **information and in educational initiatives** to promote legal compliance of forest operators.
- **Prevention, detection of non-compliance and enforcement** did not change throughout the assessment period. There were no significant changes observed in the presence of enforcement officers in the forests, information systems for promoting compliance, or enforcement measures.

QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

- **How** can legal improvements be encouraged?
- **What** constrains improvements in implementation, in particular in prevention, detection and enforcement?

The Forest Governance Index

The Forest Governance Index (FGI) is a tool for capturing evidence in areas of governance applicable to the management, protection and conservation of forests. The evidence then supports the scoring of indicators that help illustrate a country's forest governance situation and changes.

The assessment covers changes in the following areas:

- Stakeholder participation related to REDD+
- Legislative and institutional clarity related to REDD+
- Accountability and oversight related to REDD+
- Transparency related to REDD+
- Compliance promotion and enforcement related to forests areas

Each of the five areas is assessed at three levels:

- Legal foundations that promote good governance
- Infrastructure in the form of mechanisms and processes to implement the legal foundations
- Implementation of the mechanisms and processes

For each of the five governance areas, three key features serve to unpack forest governance.

Methodology

The first stage of the FGI assessment is carried out by experts using a standard questionnaire to guide the scoring and collection of evidence. Evidence can be in the form of published documents and information on events, activities or developments that took place from 2007 to 2022. The evidence provides for the substantiation of the score rather than relying on opinions or experts' perceptions. A scoring guide is provided for each indicator, which is scored out of a maximum of five once the scoring is rescaled. The score of each governance area is calculated as an average of its three constituent key features, and no weighing is applied.

To interpret the scores, predefined thresholds categorise the magnitude of change. Changes below 0.15 points are considered as 'no change', changes between 0.15 and 1 point as 'moderate', and those exceeding 1 point as 'substantial'.

Following the first stage, the data is reviewed, checked and validated by 10 to 15 country actors with knowledge and experience from their roles in government, private sector or civil society, and the ability to contribute for the years covered by the assessment. During this stage, representativeness and inclusion of groups such as women and marginalised peoples is encouraged.

For more information on the Forest Governance Index methodology, visit <https://fgi.efi.int/resources>