

ABOUT NDF



The Nature & Development Foundation (NDF) was legally established in November 2013 in Ghana. It was born out of the long presence of WWF in Ghana and across the West African

region as a non-profit organization, limited by guarantee.

The foundation has a mission to help build a society in which human development and nature conservation complement each other. It also believes that, ways exist to balance the needs of development with sustainable land uses that do not threaten forest biodiversity and forest dependent livelihoods of the region.

NDF understands that it must not limit itself to working only with those in the forest industries itself, but must engage more widely in multiple sectors and processes if it is to achieve its mission.

Though currently active in Ghana, it aims to increase its activities in Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia in the future. For more information visit www.ndfwestafrica.org
Or call TEL: +233-302-518-710

ABOUT TBG



Tropenbos Ghana (TBG) is a nationally registered NGO established in 2001 in response to problems confronting the forestry sector of Ghana.

These problems included the over-exploitation of forest resources leading to degradation, deforestation and the impoverishment of forest fringe communities. Since then,

TBG has contributed a wealth of knowledge to the forestry sector and pioneered innovative measures for tackling convoluted environmental challenges. Tropenbos Ghana has a strong convening power and is very adept in multi-stakeholder processes.

TBG led the development of the domestic timber market policy and also led many of the consultative meetings under the REDD+ process. Besides these, the Organisation has also implemented a number of FLEGT-VPA related projects, particularly those aimed at positioning the small and medium forest enterprises to be able to comply with the legality requirements.

We are well-known for our ability to undertake quality informative and policy driven research transforming their output into practice and remain a key stakeholder whose inputs are solicited in all forestry sector initiatives.

Civil Society-led Independent Forest Monitoring (CS-IFM)

Résumé de initiatives prepared for Ghana CSOs engaged in CS-IFM

Emphasis on mandated IFM, and on forest operations: Cameroon, RoC, DRC, CAR, Ivory Coast and Gabon

IFM in these countries has all come from a similar starting point: the early days of IFM conducted by Global Witness in Cameroon and continued by Resource Extraction Monitoring (REM). The emphasis has been on a 'mandate' with the forest authorities – in early cases was in the form of a direct contract with the authority whilst in others it has been in the form of a MOU with it. Two advantages are perceived in this: a mandate to visit any forest operations (the piece of paper prevents local officials or companies from barring entry) and a place to deliver IFM reports to that is recognised by all sides. A corollary of this has been the Reading Committee – a group of officials, CSOs and donors that has the explicit task of reviewing IFM reports before publication. Increasingly, IFM initiatives led by local CSOs have taken over from international groups, and these now exist in Cameroon, RoC, DRC, CAR and Gabon, supported by a regional team, FLAG. Nonetheless the



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Recording the location of a marked stump in Cameroon

Emphasis on initiatives led solely by civil society, but with legal backing: Indonesia, Liberia

CS-IFM in Indonesia and Liberia have some commonalities, but also some big differences (one country is about 20 times bigger than the other).

CSOs in both countries worked hard during the VPA negotiations to obtain

strong recognition of CS-IFM and this has led to a broad acknowledgement and acceptance of this function in the check-and-balances of forest governance. In each country the evolution of IFM was locally driven, albeit with financial and advisory

backing from international partners, so in contrast to Congo Basin and Ivory Coast have never seen the same contractually mandated approach. As a result the degree of formal recognition has been more

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Two presentations in the online IFM training materials would be useful for further understanding different approaches to IFM and how to 'sell' it to forest authorities:

- **Presentation a.1.1: What role does civil society have in forest law enforcement & governance?** A set of discussion points identifying the limitations official forest control faces, and therefore the part civil society can play with particular focus on FLEGT as an opportunity and monitoring as a mechanism.
- **Presentation c.1.2: Types of independent monitoring.** An introduction to the different terms used in IFM, the idea of 'concentric rings of monitoring' under FLEGT, and some of the reasons why different stakeholders support IFM.

The major review of IFM and the VPAs in 2013 provides a more thorough analysis of IFM in different contexts. The Annex 2 of this study, summarising references to CS-IFM in VPA texts in particularly useful. In 2014 Cameroonian CSOs published a *Position note on improving monitoring of logging through observation by forest communities and CSOs* that offers eleven important lessons for CS-IFM. An unpublished scoping study for real time, community-based monitoring I did for Rainforest Foundation in 2015 is available on request. The 2016 update for IFM in Africa is a shorter and more up-to-date summary of the 2013 review.

Funded by:



Implementing Partner Logos:



Acknowledgement: David Young, 13 February 2018. *Note: For the most up-to-date information it's always best to contact the key CS-IFM teams in each country directly.*

Project Title: **Strengthening the capacity of non-state actors to improve FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ processes in Western Africa**

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Civil Society-led Independent Forest Monitoring (CS-IFM)

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emphasis remains on a mandate and a Reading Committee.

Possibly partly as a result of the relatively cooperative relationship with the authorities, IFM in each of these countries has tended to have a technical focus on infractions in forest operations, as opposed to higher-level irregularities in permit allocation, tax fraud etc. This approach is also as a result of the overall focus of the CSOs concerned; as most are specialised in working at local level and raising communities' voices, they tend not necessarily to see the bigger picture, or anything that escape

the scope of community/ground level. Some IFM reports have covered illegal permits, especially those created specifically for smaller scale operations such as 'salvage' operations or the equivalent of Ghana's TUPs and small-scale TUCs. But the majority have been about logging outside allocated timber yields or felling boundaries etc. and nowadays tend to use the VPA legality grid as a guide.

An innovation in Cameroon has been 'SNOIE', an effort to introduce a formal structure on CS-IFM that would be recognised by, and give confidence to, the forest authorities. This 'normalised system of external independent

observation' defines different roles to community- and NGO-level IFM teams as well as to advocacy NGOs: denouncement, verification, and advocacy respectively. It seeks to use ISO standards to accredit groups and to use these internationally recognised credentials as the basis for their trustworthiness and credibility. Particularly in Cameroon and RoC there has been a blossoming in the number of CS-IFM teams, further increased by a new emphasis on community-based IFM. This will create challenges for the maintenance of standards and consistency of approaches – something SNOIE is designed to ameliorate.

Emphasis on initiatives led solely by civil society, but with legal backing: Indonesia, Liberia

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evolutionary. In Liberia, the fact that the 'deliberative space', instigated and maintained by the VPA, functions relatively well means there is a natural forum for the presentation of IFM reports. However, this forum is somewhat vulnerable to donor and local political good will and so the CS-IFM team have sought to underpin it with a Monitoring Protocol. So far, this protocol is self-imposed – it sets out the standards to which the team will operate but, as there is only one team, no one else needs to take heed. As the team operates under the auspices of an NGO coalition (indeed its staff are seconded from coalition members and is not an NGO in its own right) the protocol has been endorsed by this group of peer CSOs and efforts have been made to get the forest authority or a wider group of VPA stakeholders to endorse it, but these are moving slowly. Probably due to the nature of the CS-IFM team's origins, monitoring in Liberia has focussed more on benefit sharing and other social obligations than on technical infractions, and its field methodology is more typically through interviews with community members than with GPS and diameter-tapes.

Often, the reports have highlighted the failure of the authorities to follow due process in allocating timber rights as the root cause of subsequent deprivations felt by affected communities.

In Indonesia, partly due to the size of the country, an equivalent set of operating standards was the foundation for CS-

IFM. An IFM network – JPIK – developed these and coordinates the work of 51 CSOs and 407 individual citizens monitoring forest operations in their localities. The national-level body provides training, maintains standards, maintains a database (currently with 642

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Liberia: A CS-IFM Team member interviewing a Paramount Chief

Emphasis on citizen-reporting and digital technology: Cameroon, DRC, Ghana, Liberia, Peru

Some international NGOs that focus more on indigenous and community rights – e.g. Rainforest Foundation and Forest Peoples Programme have emphasised the role of community-based monitoring. In countries where Indigenous Peoples have territorial rights of some type IFM techniques have been a part of protecting those rights. Elsewhere, this form of monitoring has pioneered the use of smartphone multimedia technology and scripts. These are intended to (a) enable forest dependent community members and other with limited literacy skills to conduct monitoring in field conditions, and (b) to rapidly disseminate this information, not necessarily to local enforcement agencies but also directly to the global timber trade (and, in the EU and US markets, to the due diligence obligations on importers). The main target remains the local enforcement agencies, however, and evidence is shared with local and national officials and CSOs, who can check and analyse such data before sharing it with other audiences. The use of digital technology has also led to a number of platforms for reporting IFM findings, such the Open Timber Portal.



This In My Back Yard (TIMBY) citizen journalist app in Liberia

The smartphone based approach in Liberia – called TIMBY – is slightly different from these in that it has less emphasis on technical forest infractions and more emphasis on multi-media and citizen journalism. However, neither approach is sufficiently established to properly assess its effectiveness in making change happen.

A further technological development is the link to forest-cover monitoring. As access to satellite imagery becomes affordable and international forest NGOs develop rapid alert systems, these can in theory provide a trigger for field investigations into "why did

that bit of forest just disappear?". These do however beg the question as to whether the technology is pointing us to the irregularities of greatest concern. Experience from Congo Basin suggests that communities and even supporting CSOs often lack capacity and sensitiveness to understand that not all irregularities are of the same concern, strength, or harm. Furthermore, the greatest irregularities are probably those that give opportunity for corruption both at official and community levels. Technological development does not solve such issues.

Emphasis on initiatives led solely by civil society, but with legal backing: Indonesia, Liberia

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infractions reported), and tracks the follow-up to recommendations from IFM reports. It can also serve as the publisher and presenter of IFM reports in circumstances where the original investigators would otherwise put themselves in danger by doing so. Whilst there is no formal contract with the forest authority, JPIK is widely recognised and its methods have been reflected in a set of official Guidelines for Independent Monitoring incorporated into other sector regulations. It is important to note that, due to the nature of Indonesia's forest governance system (and its VPA) IFM teams monitor the work of private 'conformity assessment bodies' and the state institution that accredits them, and not the logging companies themselves.