



**RESPONSIVE FOREST GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE (RFGI):
SUPPORTING RESILIENT FOREST LIVELIHOODS THROUGH LOCAL
REPRESENTATION**

PROJECT SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

A Programme of:
The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA)

International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Regional Offices for
West and Central Africa (PACO) and Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO)

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Table of Contents

Responsive Forest Governance Initiative Overview	iii
RFGI Phase I (Years 1-3) Summary Sheet.....	v
List of Acronyms Used.....	vi
Responsive Forest Governance Initiative—Full Programme	i
1. RFGI Objectives	i
2. Context and Problem.....	i
2.1 Background.....	i
2.2 The Problem	iv
3. Expected Results and Potential Longer-Term Impacts.....	vii
4. Geographic Scope, Regional relevance, and Links to Some Existing Initiatives	ix
4.1 Geographic Scope	x
4.2 Regional and trans-boundary relevance.....	xi
5. The strategy and approach to solve the problem.....	xiii
5.1. Conduct Local Environmental Governance Assessments (LEGA)	xv
5.2. Develop and Test Responsive Forest Governance Handbook	xv
5.3. Developing a Handbook for Community Monitoring and Learning.....	xvi
5.4. Indicative Research Framing and Methods	xvii
5.5. Knowledge and Handbook Diffusion Plan	xx
Annex J: Works Cited	xxi

Responsive Forest Governance Initiative Overview

The Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI) is an Africa-wide comparative environmental-governance research and training Programme of CODESRIA, IUCN and The University of Illinois. RFGI focuses on *Enabling Responsive and Accountable Decentralization*, in forestry to strengthen representation of forest-based rural populations within local-government decision making. RFGI aims to enhance and help institutionalize widespread responsive and accountable local governance processes that reduce vulnerability, enhance local wellbeing, and improve forest management with a special focus on developing safeguards and guidelines to ensure fair and equitable implementation of the Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+)* and climate-adaptation interventions.

REDD+ is a global Programme for disbursing funds, primarily to pay national government in developing countries, to reduce forest carbon emission (UN-REDD 2009:4). REDD+ will require permanent local institutions that can integrate local needs with national and international objectives. Nations worldwide have introduced decentralization reforms aspiring to make local government responsive and accountable to citizen needs and aspirations so as to improve equity, service delivery and resource management. Natural resources, especially forests, play an important role in these decentralizations since they provide local governments and local people with needed revenue, wealth, and subsistence. Conversely, responsive local governments can provide resource-dependent populations the flexibility they need to manage, adapt to and remain resilient in their changing environment.

To date, however, environmental and natural resource management professionals from government and civil society have rarely capitalized on the functions of representative local government—including its institutional sustainability (or permanence) and full geographic coverage (for scaling up). These professionals often lack the technical and organizational capacities or capabilities to assess the potentials of democratic local government, to structure forestry decentralization to deliver equity and efficiency benefits, to meet implementation challenges, or to identify and take advantage of the opportunities it presents. There are examples of success in many countries, yet decentralization in forestry remains far from achieving its promise.

Permanent representative local institutions will be necessary ingredients of any sustainable REDD+ and climate adaptation strategy. Drawing on new and existing decentralization research and experience, RFGI will identify pathways to implementing decentralization and strengthening the links between decentralization and locally responsive, accountable and pro-poor results. It will assess the conditions under which central authorities devolve significant forest management and use decisions to local government and conditions that enable local government to engage in sound forest management that supports poverty alleviation activities and investments. The project aims to enable local government to play its integrative role in rural development and natural resource management by serving as the institutional infrastructure for the scaling up of local participation in public decision making. The project will also systematically train young in-

* The plus sign indicates inclusion of forest restoration, rehabilitation, sustainable management and/or afforestation and reforestation.

country policy researchers and analysts to help build an Africa-wide network of new-generation environmental-governance policy analysts.

RFGI aims to build and reinforce responsive and accountable local decision-making institutions through and for forestry. It will provide forestry decision makers and practitioners with a tested handbook for assessing, improving and monitoring the effects of forestry policies and projects on local responsiveness and accountability of forest-governance institutions by: a) identifying the elements of responsive and accountable local decision-making institutions, b) developing indicators (measurable variables) for the presence and quality of each of those elements, c) providing methods for measuring these indicators, and d) providing guidelines for indicator measurement and for their use in assessing and designing interventions.

The resulting Responsive Forest Governance Handbook (RFG Handbook), composed of these indicators and guidelines for indicator measurement, data analysis and policy design, should leverage forestry decisions that are more-systematically beneficial to local communities, are pro-poor, and counterbalance the common biases that exclude women, minorities, and migrants. The RFG Handbook aims to enable practitioners and policy analysts to ensure that policies and projects support responsive and accountable local forestry decision-making processes. RFGI will test the ease of use of the RFG Handbook indicators and guidelines and their effectiveness in a variety of countries. A Community Monitoring Handbook (CM Handbook) will be developed to accompany the RFG Handbook so communities can evaluate and learn from policy-making and implementation processes. RFGI will hone the RFG and CM Handbooks for wide diffusion and use.

RFGI will work in ten African countries over five years. Phase I is three years of in-depth field-based policy research and analysis for development and testing of the RFG and CM Handbooks. Phase II is two years for fine tuning, learning from practice, diffusion of the RFG Handbook Set for use by front-line forest management practitioners. The expected Phase I results and impacts include a scaling up of responsive and accountable forest management; enhanced policy analyst and practitioner capacity; knowledge generation and diffusion. RFGI will work in close partnership with African research institutions and universities.

RFGI Phase I (Years 1-3) Summary Sheet

Name	Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI)—Supporting Resilient Forest Livelihoods through Local Representation
Implementing Organization	The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and University of Illinois
Duration	Total of five years in two phases.
Geographic Focus	Africa—Countries chosen may include some or all of the following: four ‘core countries’: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mozambique and Uganda. Single case studies will be developed in an additional six ‘comparative countries’: Senegal, Mali, Cameroon, Tanzania, Southern Africa, and Sudan. RFGI shall seek additional support for comparative cases in other countries in Africa and for Latin America and Asia. Researchers conducting parallel studies from anywhere in the world will be welcome to join the RFGI community.
Goal	Strong representative (accountable and responsive) decentralized pro-poor processes, benefits and results delivered at landscape and community levels taking into account gender and equity, and with lessons for national, regional, and global levels.
Purpose	Representative local forest governance and responsible natural resource management improved in country-based landscapes across Africa, supported with handbooks for the design and improvement of accountable and responsive local forest-governance processes.
Major Expected Results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Environment Governance Assessments (LEGAs) that provide baseline data on the effects of forestry interventions on forest governance, providing greater understanding of the potential effects of climate-change readiness (REDD+, Adaptation) interventions. 2. A developed and tested Responsive Forest Governance Handbook (RFG Handbook – with indicators and guidelines for their measurement and use), designed to ensure that forestry interventions strengthen local representation, 3. A developed and tested Community Monitoring Handbook to empower communities to monitor and learn from forestry interventions, 4. Project results widely disseminated at national, regional and global levels, and 5. Improved and more-widespread local representation in forestry decision making.
Broad Approaches to be used	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RFGI will work through national-level research institutions who have an interest in decentralization and will recruit and train teams of young researchers, 2. The field site areas will include, but not be limited to, the landscapes where IUCN’s Livelihoods and Landscapes Strategy (LLS) has activities, 3. Research oversight will be provided by senior researchers at the national level, and by CODESRIA, IUCN and University of Illinois at the regional and global levels, 4. IUCN and CODESRIA will use their convening ability to bring the research findings to national and regional fora, as well as the African Union and relevant global fora, and 5. The efforts and results will be sustained through: a) the training of young governance analysts for the research teams, b) the training of practitioners during the testing of the RFG and CM handbooks, c) wide diffusion of the developed handbooks, and d) support of responsive and accountable representation processes within permanent local institutions.
Major Activity areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Baseline local environmental governance assessments (LEGAs) will be carried out, together with the assessment of existing handbooks and approaches, 2. Local governance indicators (and means to measure them) will be developed to evaluate the local governance effects of forestry interventions, 3. Guidelines will be developed for indicator measurement and for their use in assessing and designing interventions. 4. Responsive Forest Governance Handbook (RFG Handbook) will be developed integrating indicators with guidelines. 5. The RFG Handbook will be tested, based on the LEGAs, in different landscapes, 6. A Community Monitoring Handbook (CM Handbook) will be developed to accompany the RFG Handbook. 7. RFGI will use its research results to inform and influence national, regional, and global fora with respect to the value and importance of local-level forest governance, and 8. A wide range of knowledge products will be produced, including a Handbook Set composed of the RFG and CM Handbooks, research publications, policy briefs and a popularly oriented video.

List of Acronyms Used

AL	Action Learning
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa
AU	Africa Union
CASS	Center for Applied Social Studies, Zimbabwe
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBR	Centre for Basic Research, Uganda
CLISS	Comité permanent Inter-états de Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel
CM Handbook	Community Management Handbook
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COMIFAC	Commission des Forêts d’Afrique Centrale
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSD	Convention for Sustainable Development
EAC	East African Community
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community Of West African States
ESARO	Eastern and Southern Regional Office of IUCN
FIP	Forest Investment Programme (of World Bank)
FLEG	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority for Development
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KRA	Key Results Area
LEGA	Local Environmental Governance Assessments
LF	Logical Framework
LLS	Livelihoods and Landscapes Strategy
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PACO	West and Central Africa Regional Office of IUCN
PLAAS	Programme on Land and Agrarian Studies, South Africa
PM&E	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RECs	Regional Economic Commissions
REDD+	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (+ = and enhancing forest carbon stocks in developing countries)
RFGI	Responsive Forest Governance Initiative
RFG Handbook	Responsive Forest Governance Handbook
RFG Handbook Set	Responsive Forest Governance Handbook Set (RFG and CM Handbooks)
RRI	Rights and Resources Initiative
SADC	Southern African Development Cooperation
ToC	Theory of Change
UIUC	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
WARC	West African Research Center, Senegal
WRI	World Resources Institute

Responsive Forest Governance Initiative—Full Programme

1. RFGI Objectives

The Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI) aims to build and reinforce responsive and accountable local decision-making institutions through and for forestry and to prepare communities to be better able to take advantage of REDD+ (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation + enhancing carbon stocks in developing countries) and other climate change opportunities (mitigation and adaptation funding programmes). RFGI will support decentralized forest management institutions that a) prepare communities to be actively engaged in shaping the local form of REDD+ and other climate-change mitigation and adaptation opportunities, and b) systematically benefit local communities by producing pro-poor processes and results to counterbalance the common biases against women, minorities, and migrants.

RFGI will provide forestry decision makers and practitioners with a tested handbook for assessing, improving, and monitoring the effects of forestry policies and projects on local responsiveness and accountability of forest-governance institutions by: a) identifying the elements of responsive and accountable local decision-making institutions, b) developing indicators (measurable variables) for the presence and quality of each of those elements, c) providing methods for measuring these indicators, and d) providing guidelines for indicator measurement and for their use in assessing and designing interventions. The resulting Responsive Forest Governance Handbook (RFG Handbook), composed of these indicators and guidelines, will leverage forestry decisions that are more-systematically beneficial to local communities, are pro-poor, and counterbalance the common biases that exclude women, minorities, and migrants. The RFG Handbook provides indicators and guidelines and to help practitioners and analysts ensure that policies and projects support responsive and accountable local forestry decision-making processes. RFGI will test the ease of use of the RFG Handbook indicators and guidelines and their effectiveness in a variety of countries, including several where IUCN's Livelihoods and Landscapes Strategy Programme has activities focused on democratic decentralization in forestry. A Community Monitoring Handbook (CM Handbook) will accompany the RFG Handbook so communities can evaluate and learn from policy-making and implementation processes. RFGI will hone the RFG and CM Handbooks for wide diffusion and use. These two handbooks will form the Responsive Forest Governance Handbook Set (RFG Handbook Set).

RFGI aims to sustain these efforts by a) improving decision-making processes of permanent local institutions, b) encouraging governments and environmental organizations designing and implementing forestry projects to use the RFG Handbook Set, and c) producing a skilled new generation of African researchers and analysts focused on the intersection of local governance and environment. Sustainability will be measured when the RFG Handbook Set becomes the 'industry standard' that environmental organizations and governments use to assess and improve the representational and distributional effects of their projects and policy interventions, and that third parties use to verify that forestry projects and laws foster equitable and just local institutions.

2. Context and Problem

2.1 Background

The majority of developing countries have introduced 'decentralization'ⁱ (or devolution) reforms aiming to make local government more accountable and responsive to local needs, and to improve service delivery and resource management (UNCDF 2000; Agrawal 2001; Ribot 2004, 2009). Natural resources, especially forests, play an important role in these decentralizations since they provide wealth and subsistence for both public (local government, forest authorities) and private (communities, private sector) actors engaged in local governance. As important local and national, public and private assets, natural resources are a point of cooperation and conflict among actors intervening in the local arena. Decentralization of natural resource tenure, management and use

decisions can strengthen the negotiating position of recipient institutions by giving them relevance and legitimacy via powers of significance to many stakeholders (Lund 2008; Sikor and Lund 2009). When those local institutions are responsive and accountable, decentralization can support fair and effective local forums for cooperative resource management (Kaimowitz and Ribot 2002).

REDD+, as the ‘idea meets reality’ (Angelsen 2009), will have a major impacts on forest management and use—including local decision-making structures, distributional equity, rights and recourse, and forest and land tenure. As REDD+ incentives increase national government interest in forest management, new checks and balances will be required to guarantee that forestry interventions are negotiated through local representative decision making bodies. Interventions must support the ability of forest-dependent populations to negotiate forest-management arrangements with national and international agents that meet their needs and favor their aspirations. REDD+ interventions will affect the entire set of rights and institutions that make up the world of forest-dependent communities. To ensure that REDD+ interventions seriously engage local people, local representation in decision making will have to be guaranteed. This will mean strengthening of local rights and representation and creating guidelines so that REDD+ interventions use representative local institutions as their point of entry into new forestry management regimes.

Forest and land tenure refer to systems of rights and institutions that govern access to and use of land and other resources (Maxwell and Wiebe 1998), including forests. Tenure is often described as a “bundle of rights” that allow a person or a group to do various things with land or property (Maine 1917; Bruce, Fortmann and Nhira 1993; Ribot and Peluso 2003), and its importance has been well described (Alden Wily and Mbaya 2001; Alden Wily 2003; Cotula, Toulmin and Hesse 2004). Tenure and decentralization are closely linked. All systems of rights, such as tenure, involve enforcement—since a right is an enforceable claim, enforceable through law, custom or convention (MacPherson 1978). Under decentralization reforms, much land- and forest-tenure enforcement is being devolved to new decentralized local-government authorities. These authorities can ostensibly make tenure enforcement and management and use decisions (involving allocation and adjudication) more equitable and just due to their broad-based accountability to the populations concerned. In the many forested zones where the majority of the population lives in poverty and there is a large discrepancy between the rich and poor (World Bank 2001; Taylor, Larson and Stone 2006), these new decentralized representation processes can be important for local equity and stability in resource management and use decision making (World Bank 2009). Local representation will also be critical for negotiations between local and central authorities as national governments begin implementing REDD+ in a context where most forests are officially ‘owned’ by the central government—despite being managed (and often considered locally owned) by the populations inhabiting them.

Over the past two decades, most countries have decentralized some degree of responsibilities for resource management to local communities—via transfer of management, tenure or access rights, and forms of joint or collaborative management. The key elements of effective decentralization are local representation in decision making that is enabled by downwardly accountable and responsive local authorities (Agrawal and Ribot 1999). Decentralization can be part of securing of local rights and can also enable people and communities with secure rights to make more optimal use of their rights (decision making, management, benefits). Secure rights (control, access, and use) under accountable and responsive authority are an important foundation for decentralized forest management. However, they are not enough if communities and rural people cannot manage the forest due to lack of resources, limitations on management rights, or insufficient institutional support. By themselves, neither secure tenure rights nor decentralization are a ‘panacea’ for sustainable forest management or improved livelihoods (Ostrom, Janssen and Andries 2007).

An estimated of 1.6 billion people (25 per cent of the world’s population) rely on forest resources for at least a significant part of their livelihoods (subsistence, income, and employment), with almost 1.2 billion of these living in poverty (World Bank 2001; FAO 2006). The extent to which these resources

can alleviate poverty and improve food security depends on how local people are empowered (knowledge, information, technology, access to finance, influence over decision making) to utilize or protect them. Forests constitute a major source of livelihood assets for rural people. Insecure rights of access to and tenure of forest resources undermine sustainable use. This is changing in decentralized forest management, resulting from land-tenure and decentralization policies (often leveraged by donor conditionalities) now written into law for over a decade. Many forestry policies are shifting control of forest resources to the community level, as costs can be reduced and management effectiveness increased (Gibson 2001; Brown et al. 2002). But the policy rhetoric of decentralization has tended to outpace implementation for a number of reasons, including reluctance by forestry and other agencies to transfer powers to local actors and the limited local ability to demand and take on new decentralized rights and responsibilities. As a result decentralizations are not fully benefiting the people they are designed for, and are not making as significant a contribution to poverty reduction as they could.ⁱⁱ For REDD+ to have effective decentralized authorities to work with, these existing and developing laws will have to be implemented and respected on the ground (Larson and Ribot 2009).

Local forest-dependent communities, who will be most affected by REDD+ and are therefore the primary target group and focus of RFGI, are composed of groups with different socio-economic statuses that determine their access to and sharing of benefits arising from forestry activities, as well as related decision-making structures. Gender inequalities are pervasive in all sectors, including forestry management, where even 'gender-neutral' programmes deepen inequalities in forestry (Bandiaky, 2007). Empowerment of local people and the establishment of decentralized decision-making that does not take into account the social, economic and cultural inequalities between men and women risks jeopardizing the sustainability of forestry policies and exacerbating existing inequalities. Gender-responsive forestry policies consider a wide range of issues, including ownership, usufruct rights, access to forest-generated income, participation in decision making, and traditional knowledge (Martin 2004). By improving forest governance at the local community level, a full range of rural people will have more secure rights and responsibilities which in turn will result in a more equitable, steady and sustainable flow of benefits, (access to forest good and services, ability to add value to and market goods, and local responsibility for sustainable management). Improved forestry governance will profoundly shape the effects of approaching REDD+ forestry programmes.

While secure rights to land and resources are important, on their own they are not sufficient to improve livelihoods and induce sustainable management of forests. Rural communities need to sustainably manage their lands and forests, and competitively enter the marketplace for forest products and services either on their own or in partnership. Further, such rights should not be accompanied by onerous administrative or management conditions. Securing rights requires institutional and policy support, and this moves the debate beyond tenure and forest management plans to sustainable forest governance for rural communities. It also moves the debate beyond 'panacea'ⁱⁱⁱ approaches based on simplistic predictive models for social-ecological systems (Ostrom 2007). Sustainability will require iterative experimentation with ecologically sound and socially just rules as well as legitimate and responsive pro-poor authorities to support them (Diaw 2009). REDD+ must be sensitized to these factors.

The strength, robustness, and legitimacy of local institutions for forest management are key to the success of REDD+ and any other intervention that must be implemented through decentralized institutions. Legitimate representative local institutions are one reason why Village Forest Reserves in Tanzania such as the Shinyanga forest restoration (Ghazi et al. 2005; Monela et al. 2005) have been successful (Akida and Blomley 2007). More recently, residents of other villages in Tanzania and Ghana have been able to harvest and market high-value timber. Local institutions can provide efficient monitoring and sanctioning (Ostrom 1990; Bromley et al. 1992). However, the establishment or strengthening of community institutions encounters many challenges, including:

- Defining boundaries—which can lead to a resurgence of otherwise dormant conflicts;

- Gaining official recognition and relevant powers—which can determine the relative importance of local bodies;
- Introducing responsive and accountable local government systems—which can conflict with the recognition of traditional authorities;
- Recognizing heterogeneity—which can raise intra-village or local power struggles; and
- Creating equitable gender representation—where equal representation does not necessarily result in equal participation in decision-making.

2.2. The Problem

To date, the degree of understanding and appropriation of the achievements of decentralized natural resource management by intervening institutions (conservation organizations, government and non-government organizations) has been limited. While people may understand and even adopt the rhetoric of decentralization, supporting decentralization reforms is often a very different matter. There are institutions that understand and support decentralization (some NGOs, some government agencies). Equally, others choose and benefit from more-centralized development models—even when legislatures have mandated decentralization as national policy. But even supportive intervening agencies may not have the necessary technical and organizational capabilities or capacities to assess the logic underlying decentralization, or to meet its challenges, identify opportunities, or capitalize on its benefits. This will certainly also apply to REDD+ interventions. Though there are examples of success in a number of countries, decentralization has everywhere been only partly implemented and has not achieved its expected potential. Though land rights may be clearer, many institutional and administrative impediments to decentralization remain in place under the guise of ensuring proper forest management. If informed and implemented with care, REDD+ could help usher in, promote and strengthen wide-spread sound decentralized forest governance.

Through over thirty case studies^{iv}, World Resources Institute (WRI) analyzed 1) how international agencies, large NGOs, and governments choose local partner institutions in forestry and other natural resource arenas; and 2) how the chosen local institutional arrangements shape the formation and consolidation of representative local government (Ribot 2004; 2006; 2007; Ribot, Chhatre and Lankina 2008). The research, (part of which was carried out in West Africa in collaboration with CODESRIA and CIRAD) identified patterns and elements of sustainable inclusive institutions for forest management and use. In sum, case studies showed that ‘institutional choice’ matters. In some cases donors and governments selectively engaged gender biased or elite elements of civil society, reinforcing existing hierarchies and exclusions (Bandiaky 2007; Ito 2007; Toni 2007). In others, they chose to work with customary authorities—sometimes compromising representation (Hara 2007; Mongbo 2007), and sometimes enhancing it (Larson 2007; Spierenburg, Steenkamp and Wels 2007). In several cases, working with local government resulted in stronger representation practices (Chhatre 2007; Lankina 2007). The choice of local partners and the structure of local representation influence the formation and consolidation of accountable and responsive local government—representation, citizenship, and the public domain (Ribot, Chhatre and Lankina 2008). Case studies show that forestry interventions can be structured to build local representation (Faye 2006; Bandiaky 2007; Chhatre 2007; Hara 2007; Ito 2007; Larson 2007; Mongbo 2007; Toni 2007; Ribot, Chhatre and Lankina 2008).

With the advent of REDD+, guidance is needed in designing, implementing, and evaluating decentralized systems of forest governance so that they can serve both the environmental needs of the wider global and national populations while supporting the livelihoods and wellbeing of local people. They need the analytic tools (to be provided in the RFG Handbook) to establish a sustainable institutionalized space for local representation that also leads to positive and sustainable forest management and use results. Decentralized and community-based natural-resource management has reported many successes over the past two decades (Agrawal 2001; Ribot 2004; Agrawal 2005; German et al. 2009). Those successes, however, are usually partial or ephemeral. Power transfers,

accountability relations, representation and citizen engagement remain conditional or poorly institutionalized while forest management and administration requirements are excessive and inconsistent with community needs and aspirations. Guidelines outlining the minimum criteria for establishing enduring representative local institutions will help project and policy designers to be systematic and complete in their assessments, designs and implementation of inclusive forestry projects and policies.

Many indicators of good forest governance are being developed (Fripp 2003; Kishor and Rosenbaum 2003; Holland and Diem forthcoming). Most are oriented toward generating statistics for national or international-level monitoring. Some have developed indicators to guide REDD project implementation. Many have been developed in support of the FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade) monitoring,^v where IUCN is working in over ten countries in Africa on issues relating to FLEG (Barrow et al. forthcoming). Finer-scale indicators and methods for strengthening good local governance, particularly with a focus on strengthening representation and pro-poor decision making are rare. Some basic assessment guidelines and indicators have been developed for strengthening local representation (Ribot 2004; Ribot, Chhatre and Lanikna 2008). But these have not been translated into methods for measurement and application.

Climate, Community and Biodiversity Project Design Standards have been developed to guide pro-poor project implementation (CBAA 2008). IIED's Forest Governance Monitoring Group has developed an excellent method for community consultation applied in Mozambique (Joaquim, Norfolk and Macqueen 2005), and has also developed a number of tools for helping communities become more aware of their economic and representation opportunities (Geller and Thornber 2005; Kafakoma, Roka and Chimutu 2005). IUCN, through the Livelihoods and Landscapes Strategy (LLS) has developed tools for participatory monitoring and learning that also contribute to local-level empowerment (IUCN 2008). These are all means of conducting guided exercises with communities to assess and exercise their rights, resources, and opportunities in the making of specific decisions.

There are no tools, indicators or guidelines available to support the *institutionalizing* of community representation and engagement. Building on recent analyses of institutionalized representation for environmental decision making, RFGI aims to produce a more-generalized handbook (the RFG Handbook) that will guide local intervening agencies (government and non-government), local communities (individuals or community-based organizations) and third party monitoring groups (e.g. environmental or development rights advocacy groups), to assess how policy and project interventions can help build and *institutionalize* representation and pro-poor protections in permanent local decision-making processes. RFGI will assess the enabling (and perverse disabling) conditions that are in place at multiple scales. These assessments will be the basis of for developing the indicators and guidelines for the RFG Handbook. Further, while the RFG Handbook will be designed for case-by-case application, data collected in its use will be amenable for aggregation for national-level governance monitoring. We do not aim to develop a new independent set of standards, rather we hope to provide the empirical indicators and guidelines for their use so that existing and emerging standards can integrate institutionalized representation as a key factor.

By 'improved governance,' RFGI means the building of governance institutions that better represent the needs of the population in the area affected by an environmental policy or project—in this case REDD. We define representation as having two components 1) responsiveness to the concerned population, and 2) accountability to that population (see Ribot 2003; Agrawal and Ribot 1999). Here we note that many rural councils across Africa (most notably in Senegal and Uganda) are already deeply and successfully involved in forest management (Bazaara 2004; Ribot 2004). RFGI analysis focuses primarily on the components of representation—actors, their powers and their accountabilities—along with conditions for ensuring sound resource management. While RFGI will evaluate local institutional capacities, a common concern in decentralization, it is our premise that capacity *follows* the transfer of power and responsibility. There is good evidence (Agrawal 2005; Ribot 2004) that capacity and the local adoption of environmental ideals follow a transfer of 'means

of regulation' or other powers. These include powers and responsibilities to manage and the ability to make locally relevant decisions. Representative bodies will never have the knowledge and capacity if they are always excluded from decision making by the argument that they lack the knowledge and capacity. Further, without sufficient and appropriate powers, local governance bodies have little to offer their communities and therefore little legitimacy. The handbook developed under RFGI will therefore include detailed guidance on subsidiarity principles.^{vi}

There is widespread confusion over which forestry powers and functions should be devolved to local actors. To date, forest services continue to retain inordinate control over the sector. Of course, many functions of forest management are and will remain beyond the means of small communities and their local authorities. Many powers should not be devolved—such as the right to unilaterally set minimum environmental standards (which must reflect local as well as broader national and global interests), to determine which species are endangered, or to develop large-scale plans for forest exploitation. These may need forest-service oversight, broader public consultation or support from private bodies. Once, however, a forest service has made the technical decisions that a forest *can* be exploited, then local authorities certainly have the 'capacity' and should have the rights to determine *whether* exploitation will occur and, if so, by whom. These are not technical decisions. They are political decisions that can usually be devolved to local bodies—after technical requirements (e.g. which and how many trees *can* be cut) have been set (and, ideally, vetted through public processes). Subsidiarity principles outlining which powers are decentralized and which retained centrally need to be tailored to the forest sector. Appropriate power transfers along with effective means of representation are basic conditions of decentralized decision making.

In addition to mapping the local conditions of representative decision making, RFGI will identify the broader enabling environment for accountable and responsive decentralization in forestry. The initiative will explore why decentralization of natural resources has been so difficult to establish by examining three common obstacles to the consolidation of fledgling local governments: 1) poorly structured selection or electoral systems that undermine competition and weaken downward accountability of local government authorities; 2) re-emerging 'customary' authorities and other 'parallel' institutions that contest the legitimacy of new local government authorities (often with support of central governments and development projects); and 3) resistance by line ministries and by political parties to the transfer of powers and functions to local government. This research will explore the links between decentralization—when implemented—and pro-poor results. It will examine the conditions under which local government engages in poverty alleviation activities and investments. The research, policy analysis, and training will ultimately produce an RFG Handbook designed to enable local government to play an integrative and representative role in rural development and conservation and therefore to serve as the institutional infrastructure for the scaling up of local participation in forestry-related public decision making (which should extend to all local decision-making arenas).

In many countries, the rural poor remain grossly under-represented in policy-making and implementation processes. Who brings their needs and aspirations into public policy? The joint CODESRIA-IUCN-UIUC RFGI research Programme focuses on improving representation of the rural poor in local government. RFGI is predicated on the idea that broad-based representation in public decision making is a good in itself and can increase equity and efficiency in policy decision making and service delivery (Campbell 1987; Evans 1997; Moore 1997; Crook and Manor 1998; Agrawal and Gibson 1999; Agrawal and Ribot 1999; Przeworski and Manin 1999; Smoke 2000; Conyers 2002). We consider government to be representative when it is responsive and accountable to its citizens, as elaborated in our discussion of pro-poor governance, below (Moore 1997; Przeworski and Manin 1999; Ribot 2007). The proposed RFGI research project seeks to identify, scale-up, and sustain the conditions that support rural peoples' effective representation in the local arena. It aims to provide a RFG Handbook to leverage the widespread development of broad-based local decision-making institutions.

Trained environmental governance analysts remain rare. To ensure sound implementation of REDD+ that support local needs and aspirations while achieving global and national aims, RFGI is dedicated to training a new generation of in-country researchers and practitioners in Africa skilled in environmental governance analysis. RFGI will leave behind a cadre (and possibly a network) of environmental governance specialists able to analyze and develop policy and projects for socially just forestry interventions. Working in LLS landscapes and with local universities and research institutions will enable RFGI to build the capacity of local-level partners (Universities, Government, NGO and Civil Society) in decentralized environmental governance, while enhancing the ability of rural communities to better negotiate for their rights, and for benefits from sustainable forest management.

REDD+ will soon be translated from global discourse into national and local practices (Angelsen 2009). Similarly, the general 'Adaptation' paradigm will be translated into practice through the development of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs).^{vii} Many of these plans will affect forest and other local natural-resource managers. Rural communities must be ready to receive and benefit from the new REDD+ and Adaptation opportunities, and to defend themselves from potentially harmful changes in control over and access to forest resources. There is an urgent need to enable rural populations to engage in forestry decision making in ways that protect the most vulnerable sectors of the community and the interests of the community as a whole.

3. Expected Results and Potential Longer-Term Impacts

We anticipate six major result areas described below. Many RFGI impacts^{viii} are long term, though phase two will provide some insights into these longer-term impacts. These insights include: major policy changes, results used more broadly at the national level, enhanced and more sustainable forest management, or demonstrated ability of communities to better manage for climate change. Some important impacts will start to emerge during the life of the project (and these will be captured through the monitoring and evaluation process), but typically such impacts are expected to be measurable within eight to ten years. This is one reason for establishing Action Learning groups at the local level (Section 10), which, if seen as important and empowering, will be able to continue beyond the duration of this project, and could be used to track longer-term changes and impact. For example, one of the main results of Phase I of this project will be the use of the framework in multiple Programmes to improve governance in forest management. The RFG Handbook and its governance effects will then be further tested and honed in Phase II. This does not mean that policies are made or implemented, but that:

- A new generation of environmental governance policy researchers and analysts are trained—with special attention to REDD+ and Adaptation;
- Project concepts are disseminated both horizontally and vertically in-country, and internationally;
- Culture of interaction between policy makers, project designers and practitioners, on the one hand, and local communities on the other, is changed to consciously consider issues of representation;
- RFG and CM Handbooks are used to assess and design policy and project interventions by practitioners in the field and by parties interested in monitoring progress—such as NGOs or development agencies (external monitoring groups are more likely to engage in Phase II);
- Close collaboration with the African Union, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, and African Regional Economic Communities such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), should lead to the adoption of appropriate regional policies that would, among other things, address the problem of the large-scale alienation of land to multinational companies leading to the rapid depletion of forest resources.

Scaling up representative forest management and rural representation more broadly: This project tests and develops the RFG Handbook, which is designed to help deepen and to scale up local representation in forest management (applicable to policies and interventions in other sectors). By ‘deepening’ we mean the instantiation of stronger forms of local accountability and responsiveness. By ‘scaling up’ we are referring to the complete territorial coverage of local government becoming the institutional infrastructure of participation and representation – and therefore taking representation from isolated interventions to full territorial coverage. In the test sites we expect to observe some of the recommendations taken up by policymakers, project designers and project professionals. However, if successful, in combination with the publication and diffusion of the case studies, synthesis articles, and the RFG Handbook testing assessment report, and the RFG Handbook itself this project will transform the ways in which policy makers and forestry professionals think about and practice community representation in forestry and other resource management leading to more substantive work with local government. This should enhance the ability of rural people and communities to benefit from decentralized forest management. Indicators of success in a five-year time span include whether projects explicitly use forestry interventions to support representative local processes and whether local government interventions recognize the importance of forest resources in engaging local populations in governing processes.

Greater understanding of decentralized approaches in mitigating and adapting to climate change: While rural communities are likely to be among the groups most severely impacted by climate change, at present they are the least prepared to manage these impacts. Focusing our research on effects of REDD+ and adaptation will support a better understanding of how decentralization can be used as a tool for both mitigation and adaptation; as well as how rural communities can be better prepared to manage the vagaries of climate change, of REDD+ and other climate-change interventions, as well as to benefit from the climate change funding opportunities. Key opportunities in decentralization will be highlighted and tested in the context of REDD+, adaptation, and forest management.

Integrating decentralization lessons with ongoing forest governance reforms: There is no ‘silver bullet’ for enhancing decentralized forest management. The RFGI Programme will assess existing approaches, tools, guidelines and handbooks, evaluate their shortcomings and potential improvements. Learning from the equitable participation of local (often marginalized) stakeholders will leverage new and ongoing decentralized forest governance reforms by producing better understanding of rights, equity, power and institutional issues; as well as how these elements contribute to enhanced ecosystem integrity and biodiversity conservation.

Capacity building: In each country, three junior researchers from a national-level research institution will carry out research, assessments and tests, and one senior team leader policy researcher will work jointly with the core team (the principle investigators—see section 6) to guide the in-country team and evaluate the quality of the research and assessments. The project will use the research and evaluation processes to train the young researchers to work at the intersection of forestry and governance. Through joint learning and evaluations conducted with the project leaders, the young researchers in each country will learn about the RFG Handbook and how to conduct research and analyze representation practices in forestry laws and in forestry interventions.

They will compare their findings to assessments conducted by practitioners. The young policy analysts will be expected to write up their results and to present them in public fora. In this process the project and team leaders will also be given detailed feedback on the quality of their work. In addition, the project’s assessment and evaluation process—in which project and policy practitioners are active participants—will inform forestry practitioners and policy makers of the basic structure and expected benefits from and how to evaluate and implement accountable and responsive decentralization processes.

Such capacity building could include participants from Asia, especially if these participants can cover their own travel and accommodation costs. Here building an Africa-wide network connected to a global community of practice could be an important by-product of research. If support is available for Asian and Latin American participation in methodological workshops and the research portion of this Programme (for example through submission of their research working papers to our peer review, and into our paper series), we would welcome comparative case studies from Asia and Latin America into the Programme. To further support the training element of this Programme summer institutes (CODESRIA-run intensive training seminars) will be conducted on theory and methods in the analysis of rural representation, though this will be financed separately. These can be open to participants from outside of the research teams.

Creating wider awareness and influencing policy: A research and advocacy programme of this potential importance will require a strong strategy for national, regional, and international dissemination of its findings. National-level policy advisory groups for the Programme will be constituted to guide and support the work, and provide linkages to national-level policy fora. An international advisory group of highly reputable scholars and policymakers will also be constituted, some of whose members will be drawn from the REDD community. Research papers (discussion papers, papers published in peer-reviewed journals) together with chapters in books (and possibly a book itself) will all be important products. But such products are often not read by key decision makers in Africa and in donor and multi-lateral partners. This will be a key target audience for a number of products, including policy briefs (one or two pages) and narrative media (oral, written, photographic, film); workshops for deliberating findings (national and regional levels); focused engagement (side events, position papers, papers) at international events (conferences, COPs); and various forms of press releases (nationally, regionally, internationally).

The RFGI intermediate products toward the building of Responsive Forest Governance will include:

1. Training of 25 to 30 young governance policy analysts on issues of representation and forestry;
2. Research leading to greater knowledge about the structure and processes of rural representation in forestry decisions;
3. A Responsive Forest Governance (RFG) Handbook to guide the evaluation and design of forestry projects and policies;
4. A Community Monitoring CM Handbook to enable communities to evaluate and learn from their engagement in forestry policy decisions;
5. Public presentations of findings in multiple venues (training workshops, diffusion seminars, policy dialogues, conferences, etc.); and
6. Publications will include: a) peer reviewed *working papers* for each case country in a joint CODESRIA-UIUC working paper series; b) a *global comparative research report* to be published jointly by CODESRIA, UIUC and IUCN; c) a CODESRIA, UIUC and IUCN *policy brief* summarizing findings and summarizing the RFG and CM handbooks; d) an *RFG Handbook Set* including the RFG Handbook and the CM Handbook; e) *scholarly articles* in at least two international peer-reviewed journals; f) a *film* illustrating the struggle to improve the responsiveness and accountability of local institutions in forestry.

4. Geographic Scope, Regional relevance

CODESRIA, UIUC and IUCN view RFGI as a global “leverage” Programme, with an initial focus on ten countries in Africa. Within Africa, an initial four core and six comparative countries have been identified (and are discussed below) that fit within the SIDA allocation for this Programme. It is anticipated that this Programme will attract interest and additional financing from a number of sources; for example the University of Copenhagen with an interest in taking on one Africa case

(Ghana and Tanzania or adding new countries) and one Asia (Nepal) case (with access to support of the Danish Research Council), University of Kisangani in DRC (with access to CIFOR funding) have expressed interest in conducting parallel studies. Our intention is to make the Programme globally comparative by ensuring that representative countries in Asia and Latin America are also involved, as well as additional countries in Africa. However, this Programme focuses on ten countries Africa. The RFGI team is in dialogue with Ford Foundation, CIFOR, IFPRI, China Agricultural University and the Swiss research council toward contributions of additional parallel cases to the RFGI study.

4.1 Geographic Scope

The primary geographic focus of RFGI will be Africa, beginning with the countries and partners involved with the implementation of IUCN’s Livelihoods and Landscapes Strategy (LLS, and select countries involved in the WRI’s comparative representation and environmental research programmes (Ribot 2004; Ribot, Chhatre and Lankina 2008).^{ix}

Table 1 (below) presents RFGI priority LLS and WRI countries (where we have strong partners and forest-sector case activities we can build on) using the following criteria^x:

- Type of forest landscape (humid, dry);
- Type of local forest governance (good, moderate, incipient, bad);
- Background of country (Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone);
- Degree to which existing IUCN and other partner institution’s work can be used as a basis for field work—in particular the work of IUCN’s LLS Programme (and other IUCN activities), and sites in which Dr. Ribot has worked during WRI environmental governance research; and
- Ability to engage with national research institutions—especially universities, and the ability to build their capacity and influence university courses.

Table 1: Criteria and Possible Countries at the Global Level

Criteria	Potential Case Countries in Africa				Potential Comparative Cases	
	Anglophone Africa	Francophone Africa	Lusophone Africa	North Africa	Latin America	Asia
Good local government (humid forests)	Uganda, Ghana, South Africa	Cameroun			Bolivia	Nepal
Good local government (dry forests)	Tanzania	Mali, Senegal	Mozambique		Mexico	India, China
Incipient local government	Rwanda	Burkina Faso, Burundi, Congo, DRC		Sudan, Liberia	Nicaragua, Guatemala	Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos

Note: South Africa is included as an advanced case of farm forestry. Cameroon represents a case of the best-developed local government forestry in Congo Basin.

From Table 1 the RFGI Programme will fully develop research Programmes (four in-depth case studies) in four ‘**core countries**’: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mozambique and Uganda. Single case studies will be developed in an additional six ‘**comparative countries**’: Senegal, Mali, Cameroon, Tanzania, Southern Africa, and Sudan.^{xi} More countries will be added as additional funding is identified.^{xii} We will also seek complementary funding or collaborations to broaden the Programme to include several countries in Asia and Latin America (Table 1).

Table 2: Ten Selected Case Countries

Criteria	Case Countries in Africa			
	Anglophone Africa	Francophone Africa	Lusophone Africa	North Africa
Good local government (humid forest)	Uganda, Ghana	Cameroun		
Good local government (dry forest)	Tanzania South Africa	Mali, Senegal	Mozambique	
Incipient local government		Burkina Faso		Sudan

Of these ten countries the fully developed research programmes that include four long-term case studies and handbook testing with junior researchers under the guidance of a senior researcher are:

1. Burkina Faso: SIDA office and SIDA supported Programmes, IUCN regional and national offices, francophone, good incipient local government and emphasis on decentralized forest management; opportunity to influence World Bank Forest Investment Programme (FIP) funds where at least 15% is allocated for community forest management;
2. Mozambique: Lusophone, good local government, dry forest and woodlands, existing interesting work on local natural resource ownership; opportunity to influence World Bank FIP;
3. Ghana: The first country to sign a Voluntary Partnership Agreement with the EU, is a leader in REDD+ preparedness, and has progressive policies and laws with respect to decentralization; opportunity to influence World Bank FIP; and
4. Uganda: Anglophone, good local governance, humid (and alpine) forest. Shared ecosystem (Mount Elgon with Kenya), part of Lake Victoria transboundary catchment, interesting (and challenging) mix of institutions to work with (government, protected area, forestry, local communities).

The six comparative cases are to be conducted in Senegal, Mali, Cameroon, Tanzania, Southern Africa, and Sudan will involve single case studies conducted by more-senior researchers. Together the ten countries provide a full range of cases representing dry and humid zones, more and less-developed local government, and different political-administrative heritages. Should RFGI be able to leverage additional funding, further countries will be added in Africa, Asia and Latin America. CODESRIA has many members and Programmes in all four 'core countries' and in five of the six 'comparative countries', and has recently begun developing new Programmes in the sixth one (Sudan). Through its partnership with the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), and the Asian Political and International Studies Association (APISA), CODESRIA has also built strong relationships with institutions and individual researchers in South and Central America and Asia.

The RFGI team will be looking for additional funding to include other countries in Phase I, and will actively be seeking funding for phase II (Section 6.3). Using RFGI as leverage provides a strong opportunity for expanding this research to include other countries (from Table 1 and 2), and an increased level of 'good value for money' as most of the lead institutional costs (CODESRIA, IUCN, Illinois) are already mostly covered from the support obtained from SIDA. We believe that the Programme will inspire many groups to conduct parallel studies by participating in our methods, mid-term and findings meetings following the RFGI protocols.

The World Bank recently announced its Forest Investment Programme (FIP),^{xiii} providing an added need for RFGI and justification for the selected countries. The FIP is part of the Strategic Climate Fund (SCF) to provide financing to pilot new development approaches or to scale-up activities aimed at a specific climate-change challenges or sectoral responses through targeted Programmes. The FIP's overall objective is to mobilize significantly increased funds to reduce deforestation and forest degradation and to promote sustainable forest management, leading to emission reductions and the protection of carbon reservoirs. There is a focus on decentralized forest management and a significant portion of the funds will be for civil society groups to implement. By selecting the three (proposed) FIP countries (Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Mozambique) in Africa provides an important policy context for the work of RFGI where the research finding and results of action learning can quickly have expression at the national level.

4.2. Regional and trans-boundary relevance

Decentralization reform has swept through Africa with varying levels and scales of success. It is embraced by the Regional Economic Commissions (RECs), as well as the Africa Union (AU) and Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) as key to reducing poverty and achieving the MDGs. Enhanced local-level empowerment and governance is a central aspect of basic human rights—the ability to discuss, negotiate and make choices relevant to one's own life. At a government level, it is

recognized across the continent that the ‘central government can no longer do everything’ and should focus on setting enabling conditions, establishing supportive policy and law, acting as a ‘sanction of last resort’ and ensuring ‘fair and equitable play’.

Decentralization satisfies all these criteria, and is embraced by the Regional bodies that, through regional ministerial recommendations and declarations, can support decentralization within member states. IUCN works extensively with the RECs in Africa (IGAD, ECOWAS, COMIFAC, COMESA, SADC, EAC) to promote and support issues including the integration of the importance of conservation in macro-economic planning, working with member states and regional bodies to prepare for global Conferences of the Parties (COPs, e.g. with respect to the CBD, UNFF, CSD, UNCCD, climate change), providing assistance to prepare sub-regional action plans (for example with respect to the environment, biodiversity and desertification), and supporting regional level dialogues (e.g. within ECOWAS on Forestry). One priority for Phase II of RFGI will be to work with the RECs in Africa, as well as the Africa Union (AU), and the ECA. All these bodies will benefit from the lessons from decentralization and the provision of a handbook that provides instruments and guidance for the strengthening of the forestry sector’s support for democratic decentralization.

Regionally climate change will have impacts that are both national (already discussed) and regional in nature (for example with respect to the impact on shared ecosystems, such as the Lake Victoria Basin, or the larger river basins such as the Niger, Volta, Zambezi), where some of the impacts may be incremental. In this respect, the effects of carbon on the global climate constitute the ultimate trans-boundary environmental problem. As a diffuse-source (or non-point-source) problem, local-scale equitable and sustainable governance arrangements have to be the foundation of any effective intervention. Further, the local nature of the needed response, regional solutions will have to build on and support national policy, its local expression, and fine-scale interaction between policy, interventions and local practice. Sound carbon governance – especially in the forest sector – must work with local management units tightly linked to national and international governance mechanisms. RFGI aims to strengthen the REDD (and REDD+) readiness of local institutions to serve their populations and to respond to this multi-scale governance problem. This will have particular relevance to, for instance, the proposed landscape in Uganda (part of the transboundary Mt. Elgon Ecosystem and the Lake Victoria Basin). Learning from how decentralization empowers (or not) local institutions and actors to take on their roles and responsibilities in sustainable forest management will be central input into regional and transboundary climate interventions. These local experiences will guide regions’ support to their member states and how transboundary climate change issues can be redressed through local institutions.

RFGI will also work, particularly with respect to dissemination and policy influence, with both research and public policy institutions who have a more regional remit--e.g. Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), and the Comité permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel (CLISS)—as well as non-governmental groups such as ENDA (based in Dakar, but works Africa-wide), and PLAAS (based in South Africa, but also work across Africa). Likewise IUCN is strengthening its partnership with the Africa Forest Forum (AFF) as we share a number of common areas of work, for example Forest Law Enforcement and Governance, working with RECs on a range of forest-related activities, and preparing African Countries for various forest-related negotiations. The work of RFGI will serve to strengthen that partnership further. In a similar manner, RFGI will interact with European and American institutions so as to inform partner and donor thinking on decentralization, for example by inviting them to policy dialogues and presentations in Africa, in Poverty Environment Partnership (PEP) meetings, or by convening one or more “Chatham House” type meetings.

As part of this project, and with support from IUCN and its members and partners, technical meetings of regional economic commissions will be supported and convened, particularly in Phase II, to deliberate on, and promote the findings of, this research Programme at a Regional Economic Commission level. Such meetings will form part of processes which IUCN has already put in place for

such regional engagement. In addition we hope to work with the AU and support their efforts on decentralization, possibly through one or more focused sessions at different AU meetings and conferences.

While RFGI is important regionally in Africa, many lessons will have important global relevance as the decentralization reforms are increasingly implemented. Lessons from such programmes as RFGI and LLS will have a strong cross-sectoral resonance in global debates, such as those on climate change, including CBD, CCD and CSD, as well as IUCN's next World Conservation Congress (2012). It is anticipated that, through IUCN networks, the findings of this Programme will inform and influence these and other global agendas. For example 2011 is the UN International Year of Forests, and UNFF will focus on Forests for People, Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction. In addition in 2012 there will be a review of Millennium Development Goals (for 2015). Further, we will work to mainstream our findings through policies of institutions we are already working with that are deeply engaged with local government and community-driven development in initiatives, such as the World Bank and the United Nations Capital Development Fund, at the United Nations Global Forum on Local Government in Kampala in October 2010.

5. The strategy and approach to solve the problem

RFGI will improve responsive and accountable local forestry governance by creating a set of 'industry standards' for guiding interventions to support responsive and accountable local governance—these will be laid out in the RFG Handbook document. This set of standards will be designed to be applied by, and to, any organization developing and implementing forestry projects or laws. These standards will be developed in parallel to the development of RFG Handbook's indicators and guidelines that intervening organizations can use to evaluate and design their own projects and policies and which third parties (including directly affected communities and citizens) can also use to assess and monitor progress in forestry governance. The success of the RFG Handbook will be ensured by the training of in-country governance analysts in governance theory and research methods, and government agents and environmental organization practitioners in governance concepts and the use of the RFG Handbook Set. The scaling up, especially in Phase II, and sustainability of results will be ensured by widespread diffusion of the RFG Handbook, and by the RFG Handbook's focus on institutionalizing responsive and accountable decision-making processes in permanent local institutions. The activities through which this vision will be realized are outlined below.

RFGI is a two-phase five-year research (Table 3), capacity-building, governance-handbook development, and policy-influence effort. Phase I involves three years of in-depth field-based policy research and analysis and the development and testing of the RFG and CM Handbooks. Phase II follows with two years for the honing of these handbooks, finalizing of guidelines for widespread diffusion to front-line forest management practitioners, and more focused policy advocacy at national and regional levels together with assessing lessons learnt from practice. RFGI uses in-depth comparative research to generate insights and to build policy research and analysis capacities. To do so in past programmes, the RFGI core team has worked closely with in-country teams composed of young policy researchers and analysts supervised by more-senior local scholars and trained by these scholars in conjunction with the project core team (the WRI and the WRI-CODESRIA-CIRAD Programme on which we will be building has trained over fifty young local-governance analysts).

IUCN's LLS has a strong group of partners, IUCN members, and secretariat staff working at the landscape level in field sites in all the countries, as well as at national and regional levels where IUCN has a well respected convening power. While the LLS and REDD+ programmes of IUCN in Africa will serve as an important anchor for this Programme, we are very aware that there is a much wider portfolio of projects and programmes in the PACO and ESARO regions, for example the initiatives relating to poverty reduction and climate change in Africa, as well as other planned for activities through IUCN's 2009-2012 inter-sessional Programme. During the six-month start up period an

assessment will be made of where (and how) RFGI can support (and be supported by) other programmed activities of CODESRIA, IUCN and UIUC.

Our research and interventions focus on policy and decisions concerning resources essential to the livelihoods of the forest-based rural poor. These natural resources, due to their contribution to subsistence livelihoods and to national wealth, are a powerful entry point into the functioning of local governments, and the engagement of citizens. We use our research findings to promote more accountable and responsive local government that favor broad-based citizen engagement with government integrating across sectors. The proposed project aims to identify and help build the necessary institutional infrastructure for widespread and sustainable representative local institutions.

Table 3: Summary of Key Activities of RFGI in Phase I and Phase II

Phase I (3 years)	Phase II (2 years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Agreement on approaches, methods, and protocols at national and global levels ➤ Local Governance Assessments on decentralization, impediments and opportunities with respect to decentralized forest governance and in the context of REDD+ and Adaptation ➤ Identifying and understanding the most representative, effective and durable “community” institutions ➤ RFG Handbook developed and tested (first testing) ➤ CM Handbook developed under Action Learning ➤ Community-level action learning as means to integrate lessons with other activities at the field level ➤ Practitioners use RFG Handbook (the first test edition) to develop targeted policy recommendations. ➤ Research teams develop and publish background and outreach materials (working papers, articles, policy brief, film) ➤ Policy makers convened at national levels from the start of the project (inception planning workshops at national and regional levels) so as to build national and regional ownership from key Government actors ➤ Results (initial) made widely known at national and international levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ RFG and CM Handbooks honed and retested (continued testing) ➤ Community-level action learning continues as means to integrate lessons with other activities at the field level and monitor and evaluation progress at the community level ➤ Use of Phase I policy recommendations assessed ➤ Sharpened targeted policy guidelines tested and polished for the final RFG Handbook ➤ Policy makers convened at national levels and regional levels (including Africa level, and at international fora) on a regular basis ➤ Results made widely known at various national, regional and international fora

There are two kinds of research that will be conducted under RFGI. The first are Local Environmental Governance Assessments (LEGAs) aimed at understanding how best to assess the state of decentralization and to explain the obstacles blocking its advancement and the opportunities for progress. From this in-depth research, the RFG Handbook will be developed for practitioners and monitoring agencies. The second research endeavor concerns the testing of the RFG Handbook by observing its use by practitioners. The LEGA research will be conducted entirely in Phase I. The Handbook development will occur in Phase I. The first testing of the Handbook will be completed in Phase I. Indicators with draft guidelines for the RFG Handbook will be developed in Phase I for testing purposes. A well advanced RFG ‘first addition’ Handbook will be completed in Phase I. The honing of the Handbook, the polishing of accompanying guidelines for assessments, policy analysis and for the development of policy recommendations, and wide diffusion, will be accomplished in Phase II. These activities are described below.

This research Programme aims to develop the RFG Handbook so as to assess and guide design of forestry governance arrangements. These governance arrangements are instruments for increasing

local voice and representation in decision making. The effects of that inclusion can include greater buy-in and more local support for natural resource and forest management programmes, for example by influencing how forests are practically and technically managed, why and by whom. This can lead to greater efficiency and equity in local outcomes. To attend to ecological outcomes, we will include indicators of improved forest management practices.

5.1. Conduct Local Environmental Governance Assessments (LEGA)

The LEGA studies will 1) produce the basic data needed to design the RFG Handbook, and 2) provide a baseline measure against which to test how well practitioners are able to assess local forest governance using the RFG Handbook (see 5.2). In each site, in-depth LEGA research will be conducted on the form (actors/institutions and accountabilities), content (decisions, resources), and democracy effects (representation, citizenship and public domain) of forestry decentralization as it is practiced under current policies and projects. This research will assess existing forestry decentralization policies, the rationale behind these policies, the degree of implementation, and their democracy, equity and forest-management effects. This initial research provides background for RFG Handbook development. These assessments will include evaluation of decentralization discourses, written laws/policies, implementation processes and practices on the ground.

The baseline LEGA studies will elucidate impediments and opportunities for accountable and responsive decentralized forest governance; evaluate (differentiated by age, gender, caste, class, ethnicity, place of origin) ‘who wins and who loses’ from existing forest governance arrangements at the local level; and analyze causes and potential redress for equitable and inequitable local results. The baseline LEGA studies will also include a literature analysis (and any documented experience) of decentralization in the context of REDD+, adaptation, and decentralized forest management. Based on the literature and field findings (drawing lessons from practice in existing LLS sites and elsewhere) a more-detailed analysis will be made of the most representative and responsive ‘community’ institutions for decentralized forest management. The studies will analyze, among other salient factors, how central actors choose and influence local institutions, the reluctance of forest authorities to decentralize power over, and access to, resources—especially higher-value products—and will aim to identify avenues by which these obstacles can be addressed and opportunities created. Based on such analyses, the studies will identify the kinds of measures needed to make forestry decentralization work for the poor (e.g. representation, security of rights/tenure, ability to enter the market, ability to retain revenues, equity—see Section 5.4).

5.2. Develop and Test Responsive Forest Governance Handbook

Based on LLS experience, existing WRI case studies, and a broad literature review, a prototype RFG Handbook will be developed and tested in parallel to the LEGA studies (5.1, above). The LEGA studies will simultaneously inform development of the RFG Handbook. The RFG Handbook will be tested by the research team and peer reviewed before field testing with practitioners. In each country practitioners will be contracted to use the RFG Handbook to assess the implementation of 1) a forest management policy, and 2) a forestry project within their country—resulting in four governance assessments per country which will also address the institutional infrastructure of decentralization and barriers to and effects of policy and project implementation. Each practitioner will be asked to write up their findings using a report format specified in the handbook guidelines and to develop a set of targeted recommendations (specifying the officials and agencies they intend to influence). They will be asked to present their recommendations to this policy audience. Practitioners with experience in forestry will be selected from IUCN’s LLS Programme along with practitioners outside of the IUCN network to be selected in collaboration with national government, in-country donors, and large NGOs engaged in community forestry.

The tests will be followed up by an evaluation of the RFG Handbook and its usefulness. This will be done through comparison of findings from Handbook application with those found in the LEGA studies, interviews of forestry policy makers in government, institutions involved with climate

change (REDD+, adaptation, mitigation), donors, and large NGOs, as well as rural people and communities. It is clear that the potential contribution that multi-function, multiple-value forest resources can make to climate change cannot be realized unless ‘REDD+-type’ and climate-change adaptation arrangements are better aligned with broader forest governance reforms. The evaluations will explore changes in perceptions and understanding of local governance by practitioners as well as the uptake of recommendations within their organizations by policy makers. The actors interviewed will be asked to evaluate the usefulness of the analysis and recommendations. The evaluations will be carried out jointly by CODESRIA, UIUC, IUCN and in-country researchers from partner institutions. The project will select and train in evaluation techniques young in-country policy researchers in each country. In each country, the evaluation team will write up a brief evaluation for each of the four assessments and the project leaders will write up a synthesis of the assessments and evaluations from the case countries. Workshops will be organized with the field research teams to analyze the evaluation findings and to get feedback on the findings from a select group of foresters, donors and forestry NGOs.

The results will be used to revise and hone a RFG Handbook combining simple indicators with use and design guidelines, which could also be applicable to, for example, improving management of degraded lands and enhancing adaptation, as well as being used more widely in other, especially, natural-resource and environmental sectors. The results will be written up in a final report providing background on the handbook’s use and presenting a ready-for-use version of the handbook itself. The results of the RFG Handbook evaluation will be presented at a public launch and at seminars led by partner researchers in each of the test countries and at multiple venues with donors, practitioners, and scholars thereafter. The research findings on the RFG Handbook will also be presented for discussion in national and global forestry policy debates through the work of IUCN and of the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI). Many groups and institutions are expressing urgent need for guidance concerning the link between natural resource management decentralization and support for emerging representative local governments. With the advent of REDD+ the need to

Box 1: Action-Learning
 A conscious and deliberate cyclical process of observing, reflecting, planning and acting by a group of people with shared issues or concerns (including various stakeholders). It is an on-going process of challenging assumptions in which each loop of the cycle represents a refinement in knowledge and a progression in action.

foster institutionalized forms of community representation is now even more urgent. Priority will be given to REDD+ hot spots in diffusion of the RFG Handbook.

5.3. *Developing a Handbook for Community Monitoring and Learning*

Based on the RFGI research and existing LLS work on community monitoring and indicators, through Action Learning (Box 1), this Programme will develop a Community Monitoring Handbook (CM Handbook) with use guidelines, which can be

used by communities and/or professionals and researchers to support stronger and more-empirically robust community-monitoring approaches, to be used by communities to monitor their own work, lives, and the implementation of national agendas at the local level. In this context RFGI will work with existing Action Learning groups (for example those already established in LLS landscapes) to demonstrate how communities assess, learn about, and influence how authorities decentralize forest management and benefits in practice.

Action Learning teams are not designed to take the place of the research RFGI will undertake, but provide a reflective forum (or a series of forums at different levels, for example community to district to national levels with some shared membership to enhance information flow) to plan activities, be part of implementation, and then have structured meetings to reflect on progress and what lessons have been learned. This in turn sets the scene for the next round of Action Learning. If such Community Action Learning teams see this as empowering and of importance to the wider community (and not just the project), then it is likely that such groups will continue to work beyond the life of the project. In this respect the work of RFGI will be integrated into the Action Learning (especially at community levels) during the first year of RFGI. This will help the communities to a).

Reflect on the research work being carried out in terms of its usefulness to them, b). Integrate the research work with other activities and projects at the village level, c). Provide comment and feedback on the research work that might improve its implementation, and d). Provide a forum for communities and others (for example district authorities) to evaluate the effectiveness of the research work both over the life of RFGI and in the longer term.

Community-level Action Learning and reflection will be set up to complement the RFGI research. In a number of LLS landscapes such Action Learning groups (at community, thematic and even district level) are already functioning. Such community learning and reflection will integrate the work of RFGI in the context of other activities (whether projects or their own). While these Action Learning groups are not “formal”, and membership can shift and change depending on the needs and issues, they are already proving to be an important empowerment tool (e.g. in Ghana, Uganda). At the local level, they link community and local government and are a basis for wider policy influence. Such Action Learning groups have already been set up in many of the LLS landscapes.

Development of CM Handbook will strengthen community-level action learning (including reflection, adaptation, revision, lessons), and provide a basis for negotiating competing or countervailing goals of representative process, equity, and conservation. This handbook will also provide a strong basis to analyze and evaluate natural resource management approaches, equity, and poverty reduction implications of different institutional arrangements at the local level.

5.4. Indicative Research Framing and Methods

The first order of research in RFGI will be the Local Environmental Governance Assessments (LEGAs). The second will be the testing of RFG and CM Handbook developed based on our literature review and the LEGA research.

The LEGA research conducted under this Programme will:

- Assess the State of Forestry Decentralization by evaluating the degree to which institutional arrangements of decentralization (actors, powers and accountability relations) have been established in each country and in each research site;
- Explain Forestry Decentralization by studying a) the logic of intervening agencies and governments in choosing the particular mix of actors and devolved powers that are found in each case, and b) the obstacles and opportunities that shape implementation in each case; and
- Examine Outcomes of Different Institutional Arrangements Established in the name of Decentralization: by examining if and how the decentralization reforms result in increased local democracy and how decentralization and/or local democracy shape forest management.

The Handbook Development research will involve:

- Testing the handbook: by observing RFG Handbook ease of use and accuracy of their products when used by practitioners, and then comparing what practitioners find with the findings of the above LEGA research; and
- Observing the use and effects of handbook use results: by observing the uptake of their recommendations developed by practitioners who use the handbooks in test runs.

The results of the handbook development research will be used to improve the Handbook developed in the Programme and the re-designed handbook will be retested for further honing. The research framing and methods are outlined below.

5.4.1 Research Framing

LEGA research will use the well tested ‘actors, powers, accountability’ framework to characterize and explain forestry decentralization (Agrawal and Ribot 1999; Ribot 2003, 2004). This framework

analyzes the local *actors* receiving decentralized authority, the *powers* (decisions, resources) they receive, and the *accountability* relations in which these local decision-making actors are located. Assessing these variables provides insight into the structure of natural resource decentralization—and the kinds of representation, efficiency, equity, resource management, or development results that might be expected (Crook and Manor, 1998; Smoke, 2000). This assessment of actors, powers and accountability provides a measure of decentralization and whether it has produced in practice new empowered local representative institutions. It asks ‘to what degree do empowered local actors have the material resources, the authority, the skills and knowledge, the incentives and accountability that would drive effective, responsive and representative forestry decision making?’

The research will then assess the democracy and environmental management effects of these institutional arrangements. In the actors, powers and accountability model *actors* can include elected or appointed local government authorities, traditional authorities, local non-government organizations (NGOs), private voluntary organizations (PVOs) or community-based organizations (CBOs), user groups, cooperatives, or private bodies. *Powers* can include executive, legislative, and judicial authority to act on the management and use of forests. They can include social relations, knowledge and skills needed to execute authority in these domains. The *accountability* relations include any means (positive or negative sanctions) by which local empowered authorities can be made responsive to local people—such as elections or via other social relations or accepted practices of public protest, third-party monitoring, or government rule enforcement agencies (see Ribot 2004).

To explain how institutional arrangements emerge and to assess their democracy outcomes, the actors, powers and accountability analysis is located within a broader ‘choice and recognition’ model (Ribot, Chhatre and Lankina 2008). This model first examines how central authorities *choose* local authorities or actors as their partners and the forestry powers that central authorities *choose* to decentralize. Central authorities may include central governments, their line ministries, national environmental NGOs, international development agencies, and international environmental organizations. The study of their ‘choices’ helps us to understand why central actors choose to empower different local authorities or actors. It gives us insights into the kind of decision-making process and logic or values shaping their choices of who receives which powers. This is essential if we are to return to a policy dialogue that can engage constructively with central decision makers.

In this framing, ‘recognition’ refers to the effects of being chosen—once chosen, an institution is ‘recognized’ through partnership or empowerment. The *recognition* part of the analysis explores the effects of those choices on three dimensions of local democratic process: representation, belonging/citizenship, and the formation of a local public domain. The analysis of *recognition*—or the effects of *choice*—enables the research team to evaluate the democracy outcomes of decentralized institutional arrangements.

The combined analysis of choice and recognition will also be linked with an analysis of the forest management outcomes of these same institutional forms. Once the institutions and local democratic processes have been characterized, we can analyze their environmental effects by evaluating changes in natural resource management practice before and after decentralization reforms. The time horizons and complexities in assessing the ecological effects prohibit making meaningful correlations between institutional changes and actual ecological changes. But, as a proxy, we use changes in management and use practices and perceptions of the effects of these changes by both local residents and by intervening agencies who have done baseline environmental assessments and are following forest management in the zones.

From the results of the above analysis, a simplified set of forest governance indicators and guidelines for their use (the RFG Handbook) will be developed. The Handbook Testing research will consist mainly of the observation of the use of the RFG Handbook by practitioners, which will be developed and piloted in Phase I, and more-widely tested and polished in Phase II. The practitioners will be

asked to use the RFG handbook to evaluate local forest governance problems and develop and recommend solutions. The results of practitioner assessments of local forestry governance arrangements will be compared with those found in the LEGA baseline studies.

5.4.2 Indicative Methods

LEGA methods for data gathering include literature review (laws, studies, and project documents), participant observation, structured and unstructured interviews, surveys, participatory mapping, and focus groups. For each site (which includes forest villages as well as the legal and political environment they are located in) the researchers will evaluate and explain the institutional arrangements (actors, powers and accountability/choice and recognition) before and after decentralized or community-based forestry was legislated and/or implemented. Assessing the situation before will be possible via documentation (literature review), historical interviews, and interviews on the perception of change in variables that make up decentralization or representative local institutions. Similar methods will be used in assessing changes in outcomes such as representation and forest management practices. In all cases, researchers will be asked to triangulate by using multiple methods to obtain data on each variable of interest. Where possible, variables such as representation may be assessed through surveys of local populations concerning their aspirations and needs and comparing results to decisions taken. Data will also be gathered by studying the conflicts emerging or resolving through change brought on by decentralization or decentralized interventions.

In all cases, local populations will be a main source of information and inspiration in describing and explaining the changes they observe. Interviews explaining local institutional arrangements will be conducted in the local arena as well as in central large-scale institutions, including central government and large international or national organizations, intervening in the local arena.

Surveys, questionnaires and interview guides as well as detailed research protocols will be developed during the six month start up period by the core team in conjunction with the country research-team leaders. These will be discussed and revised during the initial and mid-term research methods meetings . The research team leaders will be asked to work with their teams to test these instruments and to adapt them for their specific cases. The LEGA research will be conducted over a 22 month period during which will include a literature-review period, local protocol adaptation and testing, 8 to 10 months of in-depth field research, and an intensive period of guided analysis and writing. There will be three Africa-wide research meetings: an initial research methods meeting, a mid-term research meeting, and a final research findings meeting in which findings will be presented and compared. During the write up period the core team will also be conducting the cross-country comparative analysis based on initial working paper drafts.

The Handbook Testing methods include observation of the use of the handbook by practitioners and comparison of their results to the initial LEGA results and then analysis of differences with the LEGA assessment. The practitioners will be interviewed on their experience, the questions they have about the handbook and results of its use, what they learned, the usefulness of their findings, the differences between their findings and the LEGA results. The process of using the results will also be followed through observation of presentation to policy and decision makers and follow up interviews with the policy and decision makers.

During project development in the six-month start-up phase, CODESRIA, UIUC and IUCN will agree on priority sites and control sites (LLS geographic component countries, comparative case countries, and specific field sites).^{xiv} In each country two sites with decentralized forest management projects will be selected along with two sites where decentralized forest management policies (without project support) are also being implemented.

The project core team of principal investigators (Sall, Ribot and Barrow at CODESRIA, UIUC and IUCN respectfully) and country research-team leaders (described in section 6) will work together to

develop detailed research protocols (field research questions, questionnaires, interview outlines, etc.) and provide training and guidance for the first round of LEGA studies (Section 5.1). While the research teams are conducting their LEGA fieldwork the core team and country research-team leaders will be working on RFG Handbook Development. The research teams will then engage in Handbook testing as they move from the field research portion of their LEGA research to write up.

The core team will coordinate the in-depth work of the country research teams through the initial Africa-wide comparative research methods meeting that will bring together the country teams and project core team. Country research teams will return to their countries to work in the agreed sites. Parallel comparative research will be conducted among the sites in each country and among the countries. Findings in both the LEGA and Handbook Assessment phases will be compared in Africa-wide mid-term and Africa-wide final research meetings. The comparative analysis of both LEGA and handbook Assessment findings will be used in the development and honing of the RFG Handbook for diffusion before dissemination to practitioner groups around the world.

5.5. Knowledge and Handbook Diffusion Plan

The results of the testing of the handbook will be published in a joint CODESRIA-UIUC-IUCN report, will be presented at seminars and a public launch, and will be widely diffused through hard copy mailings, internet posting, and presentations at conferences and to practitioners by the team leaders and by the research teams. The project leaders at CODESRIA, UIUC and IUCN have a long track record of wide diffusion of research findings through public presentations, policy dialogues, scholarly publications, research reports, policy briefs, short films, and training. As an indicator of impact, the handbook itself can be used to return to assessed projects to evaluate progress in practice. We would consider it a great success if one or more donors or international environmental NGOs or government agencies began to use this handbook widely, or if the handbook was also taken up and used in sectors outside of natural resource management (two indicators of longer-term impact).

The RFG handbook will have immediate practitioner audience through IUCN's programmes. IUCN LLS countries and sites, while being the basis for implementation of many of the research activities, will be able to use the findings both as part of LLS implementation, but also more widely within IUCN as a Union of members, and as an additional input into how IUCN can address the challenges of REDD+ and Adaptation. The Handbook will also be distributed to a wide variety of practitioner organizations, including NGOs, donors, and embassies involved in forestry and the management of other vital natural resources around the world. Decentralized environmental governance is a core underpinning for the future of sustainable environmental management. The RFG Handbook and publications will have an immediate outlet through the RRI network, and will be introduced into RRI policy dialogues.

The expected key publications from this Programme will include 1) peer reviewed *working papers* for each case country in a joint CODESRIA-UIUC working paper series; 2) a *global comparative research report* to be published jointly by CODESRIA, UIUC and IUCN; 3) a CODESRIA, UIUC and IUCN *policy brief* summarizing research findings and use results of the tested Handbooks; 4) an *RFG Handbook Set* including the RFG Handbook and the CM Handbook; 5) *scholarly articles* in at least two international peer-reviewed journals; 6) a *film* illustrating the struggle to improve the responsiveness and accountability of local institutions in forestry. .

Based on the LEGAs, the UIUC will produce a drama to illustrate the struggle for representation and benefits experienced by target communities. This film will be used in practitioner and policy-maker training and discussions. It will also be used when discussing our Programme's findings with populations in our research sites and in areas where policy makers and practitioners engage local populations. This drama will be based on the data collected in the LEGA process and will outline the opportunities for improvement the RFGI handbooks are designed to capture. The writing of the script, filming, editing, and production of a polished product will take one year beginning at the end of the LEGA analysis period.^{xv}

RFGI will diffuse the research findings and RFG Handbook Set through many other institutions working on local democracy and environment, such as World Resources Institute (WRI), Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), the International Center for Local Government (ILCD), and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF—which focuses on development of local government). RFGI core team has members closely associated with each of these groups.

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ENDNOTES

ⁱThere are a number of definitions of decentralization. We use the term 'decentralization' to mean the transfer of power from higher level to lower level within the political-administrative structure of the state. Decentralization involves transfers of power to local authorities who are accountable and responsive to the local population. Accountability and responsiveness are basic elements of representation (see Box 1 Ribot 2004:9).

ⁱⁱ For evidence and arguments concerning the ability of well-structured decentralization reforms to increase equity and efficiency of local management and use decisions, see discussion in section 2.2 and see Campbell 1987; Evans 1997; Moore 1997; Crook and Manor 1998; Agrawal and Gibson 1999; Agrawal and Ribot 1999; Przeworski and Manin 1999; Smoke 2000; Conyers 2002; Ribot 2004; Ribot, Chhatre and Lankina 2008.

ⁱⁱⁱ Panacea here refers to a blueprint for a single type of governance system (e.g. Government ownership, privatization, community ownership) that is applied to all environmental problems (Ostrom, Janssen and Andries 2007). Such “blueprint” or “silver-bullet” approaches have all too often been used, with often negative consequences.

^{iv} The studies were in Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, China, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Mali, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Zimbabwe (most countries had two to four case studies)—LLS works in 11 of these countries. The WRI case studies are available on line at <http://www.wri.org/publications?sort=desc&order=By+Title>. To find these publications on the WRI web page, please scroll down to WP (for Working Papers) and look for the number of the corresponding working paper. For a second round of ten studies see Ribot et al. 2008.

^v See http://ec.europa.eu/development/policies/9interventionareas/environment/forest/flegt_en.cfm.

^{vi} Subsidiarity is the concept that there are advantages to making decisions at the lowest political-administrative level for which there are no significant externalities for higher scales of organization (see Ribot 2004 for a discussion of natural resource subsidiarity principles). To build local democracy, local representative authorities need means to carry out their mandates. In well-designed decentralization policies, their obligations or responsibilities are matched by appropriate and sufficient resources and decision-making powers. In decentralization reforms, however, responsibilities are often transferred without corresponding means. Subsidiarity principles—to guide the transfer of appropriate powers—are rarely considered in forestry decentralization. Obligations and burdens that are beyond the means of local authorities—and should remain central responsibilities—are transferred, while decisions easily made locally without a threat to the natural resources are often retained centrally. The decisions centrally retained are often most appropriate for the local-level decision makers, such as decisions over allocation of access rights or decisions over forest-management objectives (Bazaara 2006). Well-designed policies will transfer obligations progressively and with matching support. Unfunded mandates in decentralization fail in all sectors. If a mandate (responsibilities) cannot be matched by both financial and technical support, then it not appropriate to decentralize it. Mandates that require no particular skill or finance can easily be transferred without concern—and there are many. The healthy employment of subsidiarity principles in decentralization will be a part of our analysis and the guidelines that follow from the project.

^{vii} August 2010, Ribot will be working with the UNFCCC NAPA team on a methods workshop for NAPA country representatives as part of the International Conference on Sustainable Development in Semi-arid Regions—a Rio+20 preparatory meeting (see [http://www.unfccc.org/press/2010/08/20100810_napa_workshop.html](#)). At the ICID NAPA meeting we intend to introduce the RFGI concepts and pave the way for uptake of RFGI results.

^{viii} We use the term “result” in line with IUCN’s results-based approach to the planning and implementation of its inter-sessional programmes. In this respect results are equivalent to outcomes, which some groups used in their planning. Impacts operate at a higher scale and on a longer term.

^{ix} The full list of WRI programme cases included: Africa (Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe); Asia (China, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Vietnam; Thailand); and Latin America (Bolivia, Brazil, Nicaragua).

^x Note on relevant criteria not used: Many other criteria were considered in our country selection—including the quality of national democratic processes, the strength of central government, the degree of decentralization in other sectors, the portion of the population in poverty, per capita income. However, the criteria discussed above were felt to be the most relevant. The quality of national-level democracy, however, requires special mention since many people argue that local democracy is impossible without national-level democracy. We agree that while most governments claim to support decentralization, democratic decentralization is less likely in countries without some level of central democracy, good governance and discipline. It is possible to have thriving local democracy without national democracy, but it is not likely to last and it is not likely to be strong. De Tocqueville, however, viewed the local arena as the birthplace of democracy, showing how American democracy emerged in small town meetings. To establish effective and sustainable local representation it is helpful to have supportive decentralization reforms at the national level (hopefully backed by acceptable levels of national democracy, governance and discipline). RFGI goes beyond the national rhetoric and legislation to see how decentralization operates at the local level so as to promote local-level representation regardless of conditions at the center. By supporting local democracy (within

national policies and local actions), we believe one also promotes central democracy via long-term demonstration and learning effects. In addition, leveraging democracy from below has the advantage of being less threatening to existing powers, and can also create a “groundswell” of influence for higher level-changes (should they be needed). The focus of this proposal is the community level—where many forest management and practice decisions are made. We feel that feedback of local-level observations to national and international decision makers is critical for advancing any local democracy or decentralization agenda. Hence, we did not choose our country cases based on the quality of national-level democracy.

^{xi} Fund permitting, we would also include Ethiopia, Liberia and Burundi for greater diversity in the sample.

^{xii} Professors Thorsten Treue and Jens Friis Lund of the Faculty of Live Sciences, Department of Forestry at the University of Copenhagen will be applying to the Danish Research Council (DRC) for funds to work with RFGI to conduct research in Ghana and Tanzania using the same approach and methods as RFGI. If DRC support is granted, RFGI will add two more core countries from among the comparative case countries.

^{xiii} http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTCC/Resources/FIP_Issues_Note.pdf; and

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTCC/Resources/FIP_CIF_Design_Meeting_Objectives_Sierra.pdf

^{xiv} This initiative will focus on, and work with countries that are implementing IUCN’s LLS (Annex C) and several countries that have been core to the WRI decentralization research and policy interventions (there is considerable overlap in LLS and WRI sites), as one core component of site level activities is decentralized resource management. Additional countries and/or sites may be included in the more-detailed research programme definition.

^{xv} The core team PI, Jesse Ribot has produced two such dramas to date. These have proven to be extremely useful handbooks for communicating complex ideas about representation and equity in the forestry sector. They have been used by practitioners in the field in Africa and have been taken up by local elected authorities as handbook for them to discuss the difficulties of their job with their own communities, other representative authorities and outside supporters. For a discussion of the first of these films, see http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=dialogue.thismonth&dialogue_id=445151. The films have been in Wolof with English and French subtitles. They are not structured didactic documentaries, but rather as dramas reflecting the struggle of local people for basic rights in forest management and use.