

# EFI's Forest Governance Index : the tool and insights

WRI Forest Governance and Policy Conference

April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024

1. About the European Forest Institute
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# About EFI

- The European Forest Institute is an international organisation established by European States
- We provide **policy support** and conduct **research** on issues related to forests
- Our work in the field of policy support includes
  - Supporting decision makers and policy designers
  - Support policy and governance reforms to safeguard the world's forests
  - Facilitating partnerships between producing and consuming countries to foster legal, deforestation-free and sustainable timber, and agricultural commodity production and trade

# Why a forest governance index and what it covers?

Forest governance, although lacking a universally agreed-upon definition, entails decision-making processes, institutions, and outcomes at various levels

To better help country stakeholders understand and improve their forest governance approaches and provide people with the necessary information to make impactful decisions to conserve forests

we first need to be able explain forest governance and what triggers changes

# Background on the FGI

- In 2018, we assessed the potential of global indices for understanding the governance situation in the forest sector
  - Broad range of underlying data, e.g.
    - own assessment or in country survey
    - other indexes
    - mix of own assessment and other indexes
    - often perception based (18 out of 19)
  - Sectors
    - all sectors including environment
    - no index gather data on the forest sector

1	Environmental Democracy Index
2	Natural Resource Governance Index
3	Revenue Watch Index
4	WEF Global Competitiveness index
5	IFAD's Rural Performance Assessment
6	World Justice Project "Rule of Law Index"
7	Freedom in the World
8	Freedom House's Freedom of the Press
9	The Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index
10	Economist Intelligence Unit
11	Corruption Perception Index
12	World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators
13	Afrobarometer
14	Global Integrity – Africa Integrity Indicators
15	The Ibrahim Index of African Governance
16	Fragile States Index
17	The Legatum Prosperity Index
18	Varieties of Democracy
19	African Development Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment

# Background on the FGI

- In 2018, we assessed the potential of global indices for understanding the governance situation in the forest sector
- We found that existing indices did not provide proxies for describing the state of and changes in forest governance
  - Existing indices could help to show status/changes in a few aspects of governance, e.g. requirements to publish laws
  - However, cannot rely on them as proxy to forest sector to e.g.
    - understand forest governance situation
    - capture variation in governance at (sub)national levels
    - facilitate cross-national comparison

# Background on the FGI

- In 2018, we assessed the potential of global indices for understanding the governance situation in the forest sector
- We found that existing indices did not provide proxies for describing the state of and changes in forest governance
- In 2019, we started to develop a set of indicators and an approach for capturing forest governance evidence at the national and sub-national level
- As we work with stakeholders to use the indicator set and see what is useful / needed, we continue to improve the framework

# The tool assesses

## 5 governance areas

Assessment to understand how governance changes through time, and in response to policy processes time





# Within each area, it looks at the existence of...

## 1 Legal provisions that promote good governance

## 2 Mechanisms, tools and processes to implement these legal provisions

## 3 The extent to which these mechanisms are effectively used and implemented

<b>Stakeholder participation</b>	<p>Legal basis and clarity on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right to public participation</li> <li>• Freedom of association</li> <li>• Right to challenge regulations</li> </ul>	<p>Are there mechanisms and processes for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multistakeholder structures</li> <li>• Representativeness and inclusiveness of stakeholders existing structures</li> </ul>	<p>In practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is government open to dialogue</li> <li>• Is dialogue taking place regularly</li> <li>• Are stakeholders participating effectively</li> </ul>
<b>Legal and institutional clarity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• The division of power among administrations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenging the laws and regulations</li> <li>• Identification of areas for legal reform</li> <li>• Achieving clarity and completeness of legal frameworks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are government entities abiding to their roles and responsibilities</li> </ul>
<b>Accountability and oversight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An oversight body</li> <li>• Independent monitoring</li> <li>• A complaints mechanisms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holding the government to account</li> <li>• Independent monitoring of the sector</li> <li>• Stakeholders to raise complaints</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the government being controlled</li> <li>• Are independent monitors active in country</li> <li>• Do stakeholders use complaint system</li> </ul>
<b>Transparency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public access to information</li> <li>• Grounds for refusing information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information availability and accessibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are forest decision-making processes transparent</li> <li>• Do people make use of disclosed information</li> </ul>
<b>Compliance promotion and enforcement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandates for addressing non-compliance requirements</li> <li>• Type of response and penalties for non-compliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capturing and sharing information on legal compliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there initiatives to promote legal compliance</li> <li>• Are enforcement officials present in the forest</li> <li>• Are enforcement actions being applied</li> <li>• Do information systems for enforcement work</li> </ul>

# Data can be disaggregated at different levels

To measure specific aspects in detail, several indicators are broken down in sub-indicators

## Based on **areas of law**

*To better understand where blockages are or where advances take place:*

- land-use planning
- land allocation
- forest use and management
- activities impacting forests and forest lands

*Disaggregated data is gathered in relation to:*

- breadth and quality of participation in the allocation and use of forests and forest land
- division of roles and power
- quality of regulations
- legal basis for compliance and enforcement
- prevention, detection of non-compliance and enforcement

## Based on **stakeholder groups**

*To better understand the engagement of different groups in a policy process :*

- Forest-dependent/indigenous peoples, smallholders/smallholder groups and community-based organisations
- Informal enterprises
- Civil society organisations
- Formal enterprises

- stakeholder participation
- identification of areas for legal reform

# Methodology

How to measure and how to engage stakeholders

Abstract geometric shapes in the bottom right corner, consisting of several overlapping triangles and polygons in various shades of green and teal, creating a modern, layered effect.

# How to measure

- FGI collects data on 47 forest governance indicators
  - A standard questionnaire guides the scoring and collection of evidence
    - The **questions** guide the collection of evidence for each indicator
    - **Translations** available in several languages and adjusted to commonly used terminology
    - A **glossary with definitions** helps make sure everyone understands the concepts the same way across countries
    - A **scoring guide** facilitates comparison of the data
- Scores range from 2 to 13

**Indicator A.2.a: Multistakeholder structures established with recognised role in forest-related policy processes and dialogues**

'Multi-stakeholder structures' (MSS) refers to those set up under forest-related policy processes, such as national or multilateral stakeholder structures, negotiating structures, implementation structures, or structures that are used to bring stakeholders together to participate in dialogue, decision making, and implementation of a forest-related policy process and/or forest-related policies, laws and regulations.

If there is more than one forest-related policy process in the country, provide one response per process assessed. Specify the policy process that the answer refers to in the box 'Details of the evidence' below.

		20xx BL	20xy CRP
<b>Guiding question:</b>	In practice, is there an MSS with a formally recognised role in the forest-related policy process and dialogue?  "Formally recognised" refers to whether the participation in and inputs of MSS into the forest-related policy process are mandated by the relevant government entities.  When assessing the current reporting period, if evidence for scoring is prior to the reporting period year, please indicate the year the indicator has been fulfilled.		
<b>Scoring guide</b>	MSS established with formally recognised role to contribute to all/any part of a forest-related policy process	5	5
	MSS established with recognised role to contribute to a subset of a forest-related policy process	4	4
	MSS established with no recognised role to contribute to a forest-related policy process	3	3
	Stakeholders can freely assemble but no MSS established	2	2
	Stakeholders cannot assemble	1	1

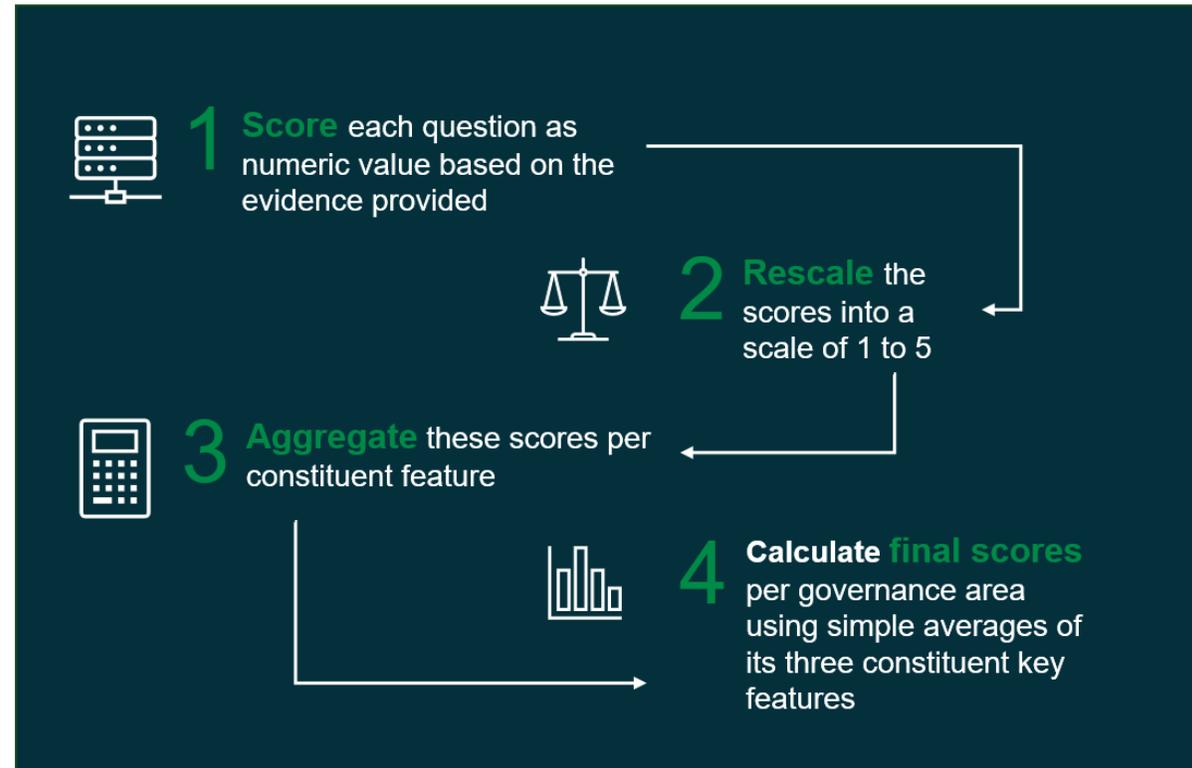
# How to measure

- FGI collects data on 47 forest governance indicators
- A standard questionnaire guides the scoring and collection of evidence
- The evidence (and not perception) substantiates the score

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<b>Details of the evidence to support and justify the scoring</b>			
	20xx BL		
	20xy (CRP)		

# How to measure

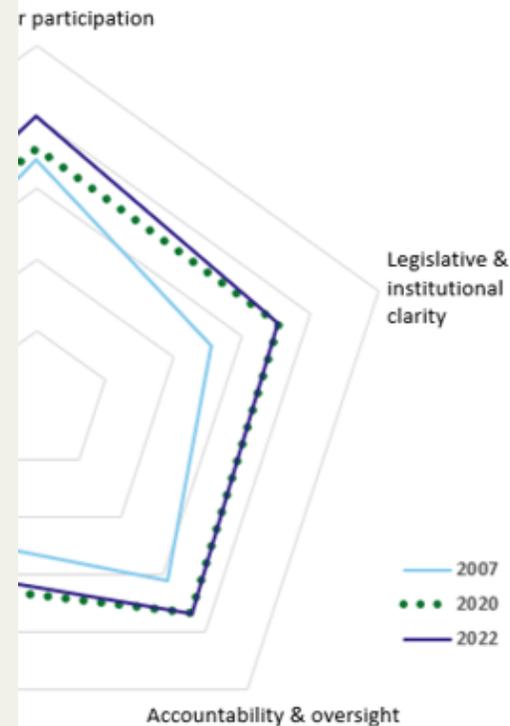
- FGI collects data on **47 forest governance indicators**
- A **standard questionnaire** guides the scoring and collection of evidence
- The **evidence** (and not perception) substantiates the score
- **Rescaling** and **aggregation** takes place before calculating final scores
  - Scores are rescaled out of a maximum of 5
  - Final scores per area are calculated as an average of its three constituent key features



# How to measure

- FGI collects data on 47 forest governance indicators
- A standard questionnaire guides the scoring and collection of evidence
- The **evidence** (and not perception) substantiates the score
- **Rescaling** and **aggregation** takes place before calculating final scores
- To interpret the scores, predefined thresholds categorise the **magnitude of change**.

Changes are assessed as 'no change', 'moderate', and 'substantial'



Scores and recent trends		
Areas of governance	Score 2022	Trend 2020-22
Stakeholder participation	4.01	Significantly improving
Legislative and institutional clarity	3.54	Moderately improving
Accountability and oversight	3.67	No change
Transparency	2.87	Moderately decreasing
Compliance promotion and enforcement	3.27	No change

Key  Significantly improving  Moderately improving  No change  Moderately decreasing  Significantly decreasing

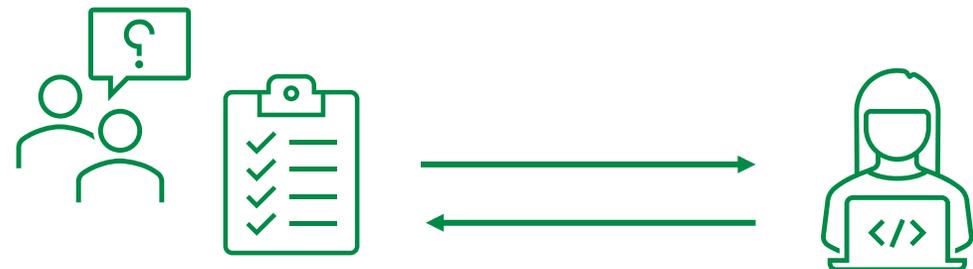
# Stakeholders engage at different moments

The FGI aims to support national decisions, and so the use of the FGI pays particular attention to how stakeholder are involved in the assessment

Stakeholders engage:

- During **data collection**
- During the **analysis of the findings**
- Providing **feedback** once work is done

The data is checked and validated by **10 to 15 actors in country** with relevant historic and contemporary knowledge, ensuring a balance across different stakeholder groups.



# Country assessments

Assessments of forest governance can be made at both national and subnational levels

# Assessments

- Examine the influence that forest-related policy processes have on a country's forest governance
- Compare data drawn from the FGI with other governance assessments at the national level

## **Africa**

examined the influence of **FLEGT** and **REDD+ processes** on national forest governance situation

## **Indonesia**

examined the forest governance situation in the context of **palm oil** production in one District

A world map with a light beige background. The map shows the continents in a light tan color. There are several orange dots placed on the map: one in West Africa, one in Central Africa, two in East Africa, and one in Southeast Asia. The text is overlaid on the left side of the map.

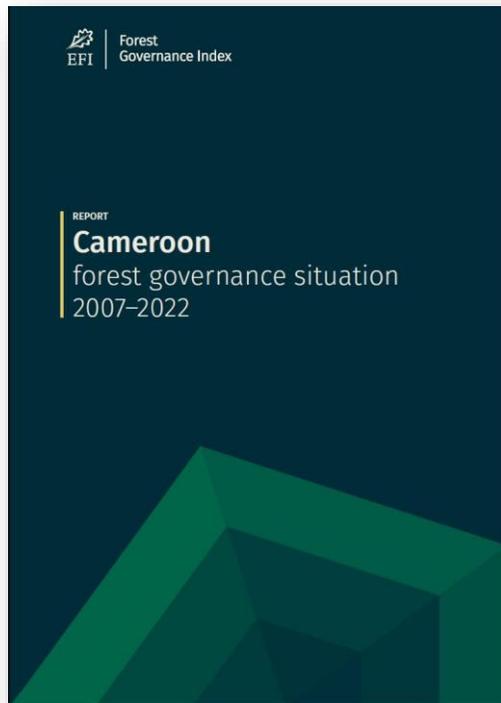
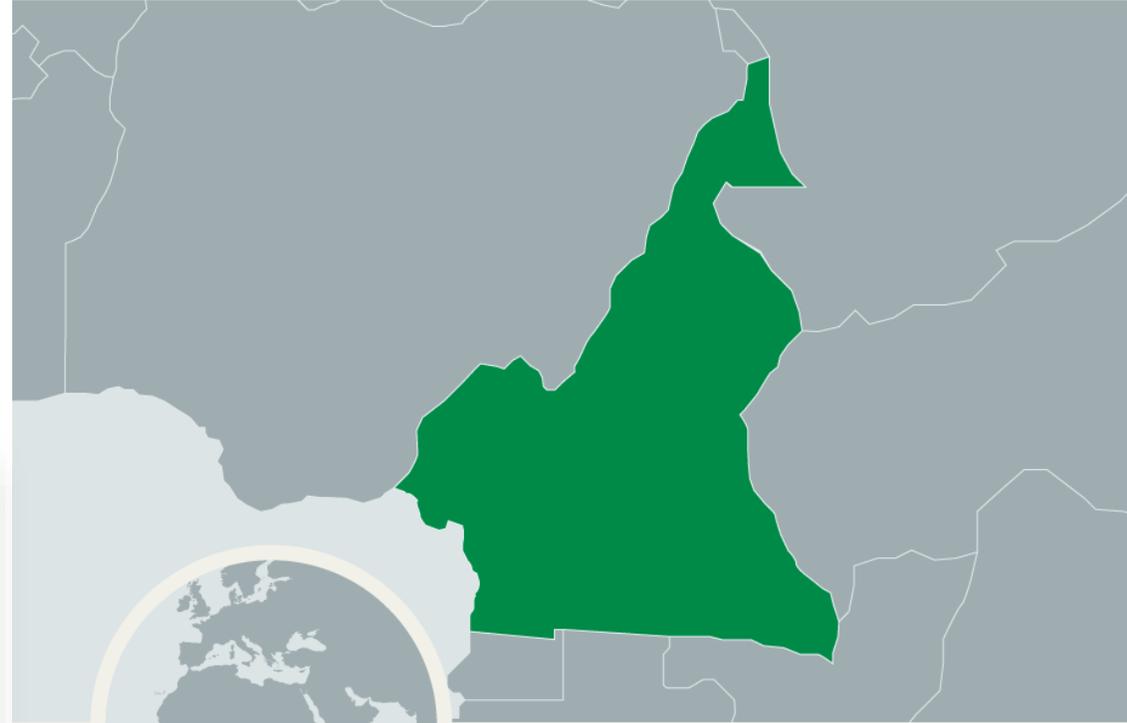
# Do international initiatives have an impact on forest governance?

In addition to the specific goals of a policy process, REDD+ and FLEGT both have fostered multistakeholder participation, legislative clarity through legal reforms, accountability mechanisms and other aspects of forest governance.

Divergences in the effectiveness of these initiatives arise due to different national contexts.

# Cameroon

## Evolution of forest governance between 2007-2022



**EFI Forest Governance Index**

### SNAPSHOT

#### REDD+-related forest governance in Cameroon

**Introduction**

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

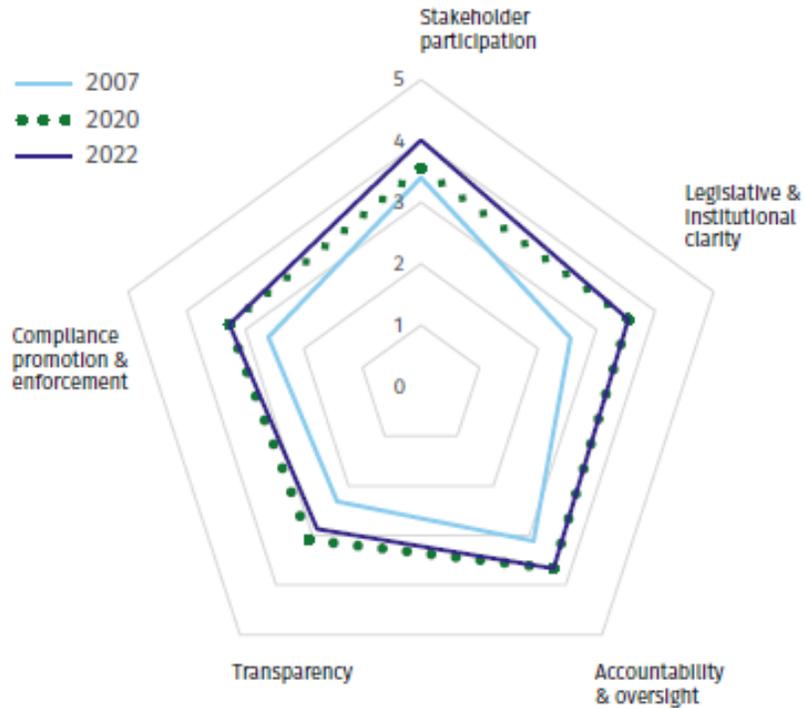
**Evolution of forest governance in Cameroon between 2007-2022**

AREA OF GOVERNANCE	SCORE 2022	TREND 2007-22
Stakeholder participation	3.33	→
Legislative and institutional clarity	3.33	→
Accountability and oversight	2.44	→
Transparency	3.09	→
Compliance promotion and enforcement	3.27	→

**KEY** ↑ Significantly improving    → Moderately improving    → No change    ↓ Moderately decreasing    ↓ Significantly decreasing

The FGI assessment provides insights into the country's forest governance regime, highlighting areas of strength and weaknesses.

# Changes in relation to forest governance areas



Related to **FLEGT**

## SCORES AND RECENT TRENDS

AREA OF GOVERNANCE	SCORE 2022	TREND 2020-22
Stakeholder participation	4.01	↑ Moderately improving
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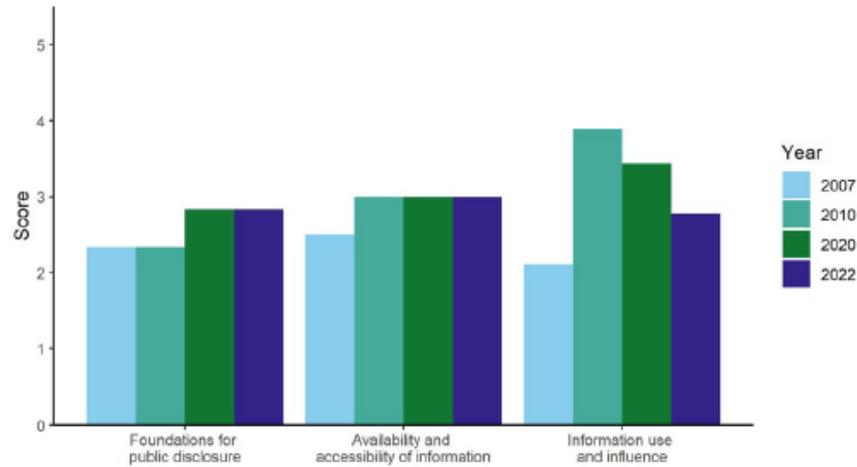
Related to **REDD+**

**KEY**    ↑ Significantly improving    ↗ Moderately improving    → No change    ↘ Moderately decreasing    ↓ Significantly decreasing

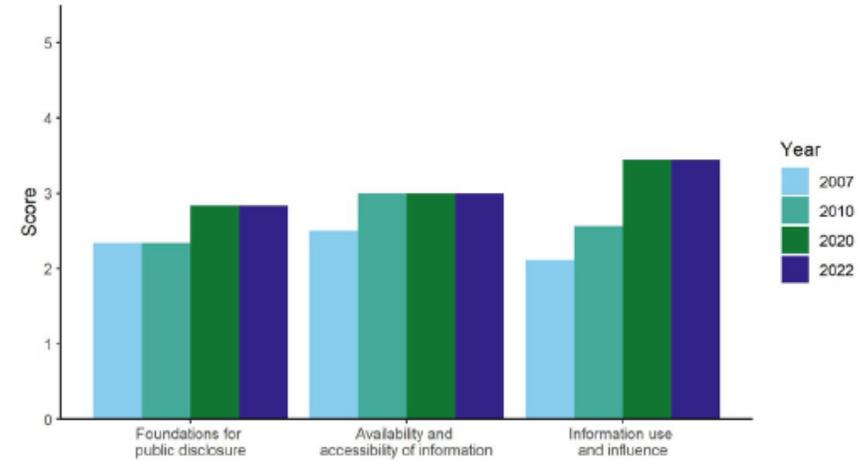


# Transparency in detail

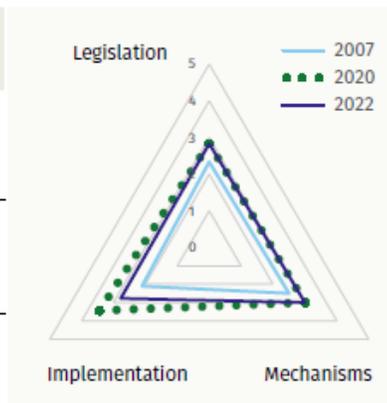
## Transparency related to FLEGT



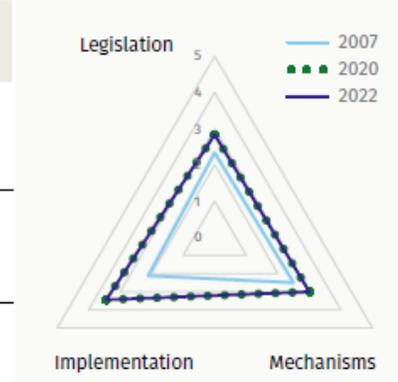
## related to REDD+



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



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



# Insights

Data analysis depicts the common challenges in forest governance that many countries face, illustrate trends in different areas of governance, compare national and forest governance situations, and shed light on uses of FGI data by different stakeholders

# Note of caution

Countries begin from varied starting points and face unique development needs, environmental pressures, and political contexts.

FGI analyses do not intend to make value statements or rank countries, but rather to empower local actors in making informed decisions tailored to their specific circumstances.

Understanding local nuances helps stakeholders navigate challenges effectively.

# FGI findings in general

- Legal provisions improved significantly over last decade
- Existence and use of mechanisms to implement provisions is lagging
- There is still a need to improve national legal frameworks

## What role for stakeholders

- Participation and transparency are key in fostering effective forest governance
- Difficulties remain in engaging the (formal and informal) private sector in governance discussions

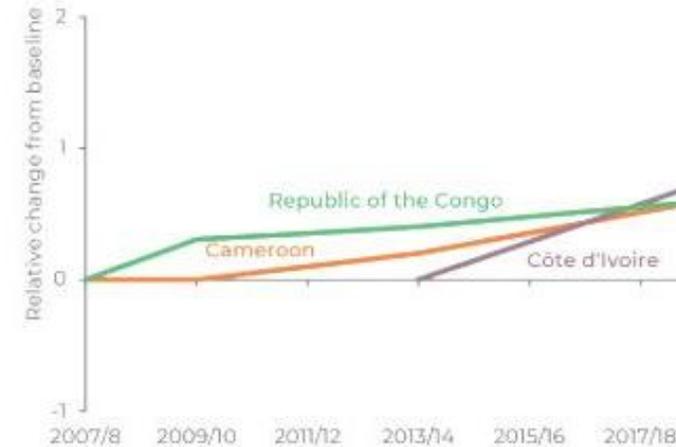
## Opportunities

- International initiatives are perceived as important drives to bolster governance

# Assessing change

across forest governance areas

Figure 4.5. Improved then stalled in compliance, promotion of forest law enforcement Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire and the Republic of the Congo



Note: The graph shows the magnitude of change in the Forest Governance score for each country within a given year compared to that country's initial baseline. It does not reflect the absolute Forest Governance score for each country. Improvements are notably reinforced when coupled with and accompanied by similar processes.

Source: European Forest Institute (2023)

## 4.3.2. Risks of illegal logging and deforestation

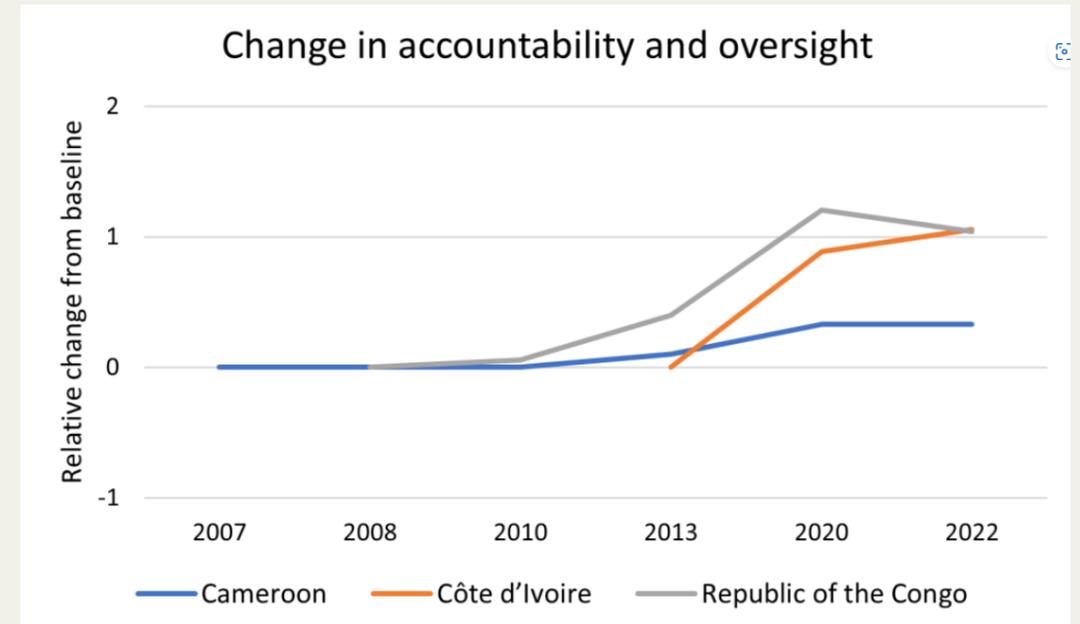
**Corruption and poor governance continue to pose significant risks of illegal deforestation in many tropical forest countries. Risks in the implementation of forest laws continue to limit the availability of quality data on the scale and nature of illegal activities.**

### Corruption's connection to illegality

Corruption continues to be widespread in some forest countries, contributing to illegal deforestation and other forest crimes.

# Accountability and oversight

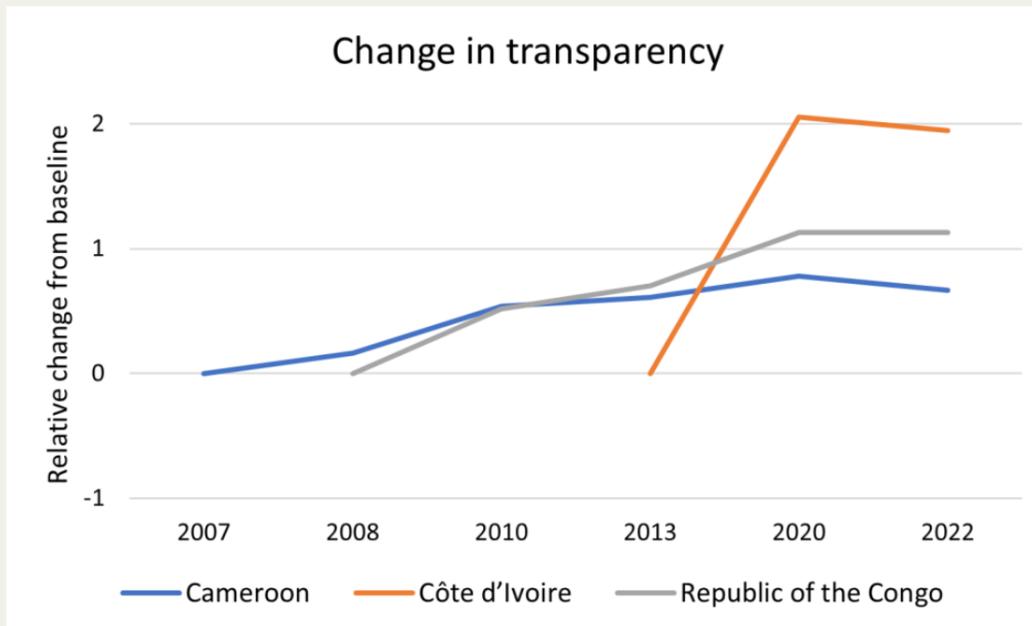
- **Civil society monitors** are increasingly recognized and has improved its effectiveness
- **Oversight bodies** have been established to monitor government agencies in charge of forests, but they often withhold their findings from the public
- There are legal provisions in place for the creation of **complaints mechanisms**, but these mechanisms are either non-existent or do not have data on how often citizens use them or how successful they are at resolving complaints



Improvements in accountability systems continue in Cote d'Ivoire but have stalled or been reversed in the Republic of the Congo and Cameroon

**Note on the graph:** The graph shows the magnitude of change in the Forest Governance Index score for each country within a given year compared to that country's initial baseline. It is important to note that this does not reflect the absolute Forest Governance score for each country and as such should not be interpreted as implying a comparison between the three countries, except in terms of how governance has evolved in each. A closer look at the data shows that governance improvements are notably reinforced when coupled with and accompanied by political processes

# Transparency and access to information



Gains in transparency have recently stalled or been reversed in Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire and the Republic of the Congo

## Clear improvements...

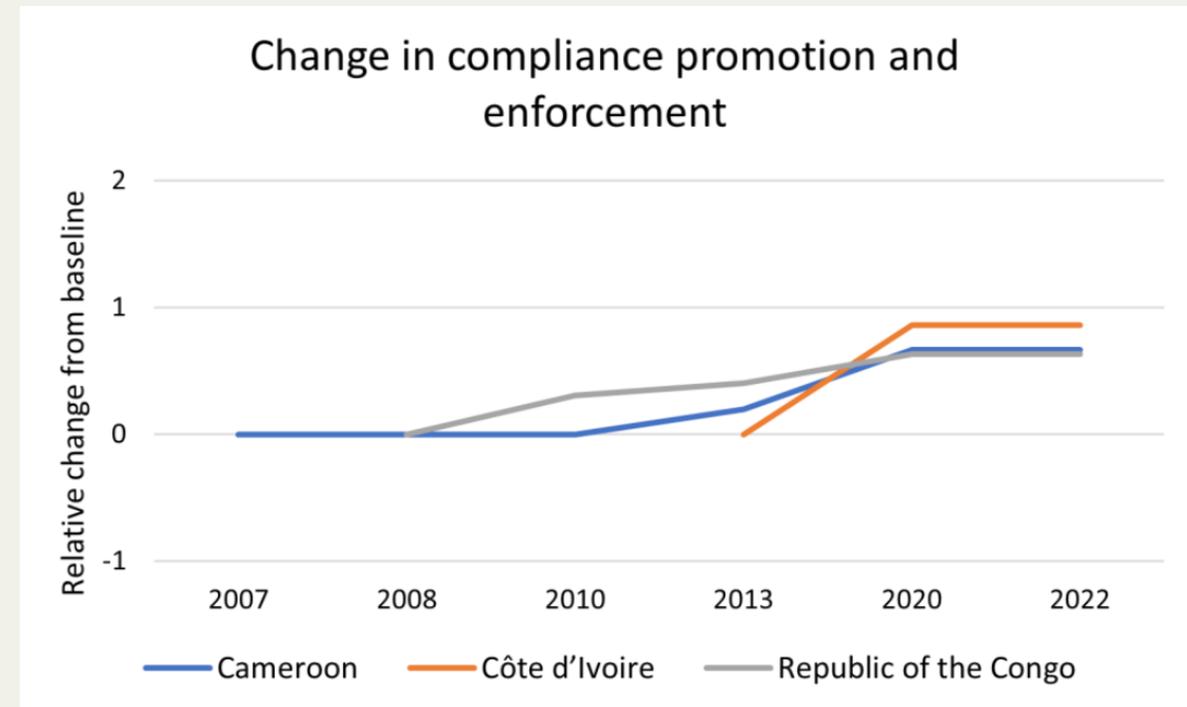
- Strong improvements over the past decade in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, and the Republic of the Congo, offering **better access to and availability of data and legal texts** pertaining to forests
- This tendency **is supported by laws** that provide people more access to information on forests and by the growing availability of public data

## ... often linked to external influences

- This increase in transparency frequently occurs in **response to forest policy processes** like FLEGT VPAs and REDD+
- As the political influence of international processes decreases, so does the pace of improvements in this area and the availability of information

# Compliance promotion and enforcement

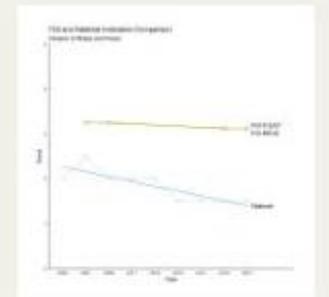
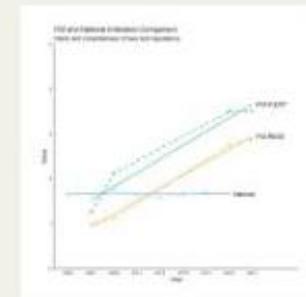
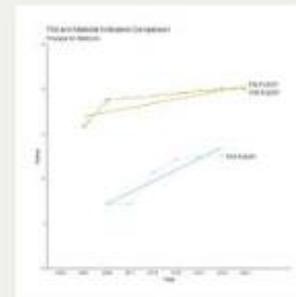
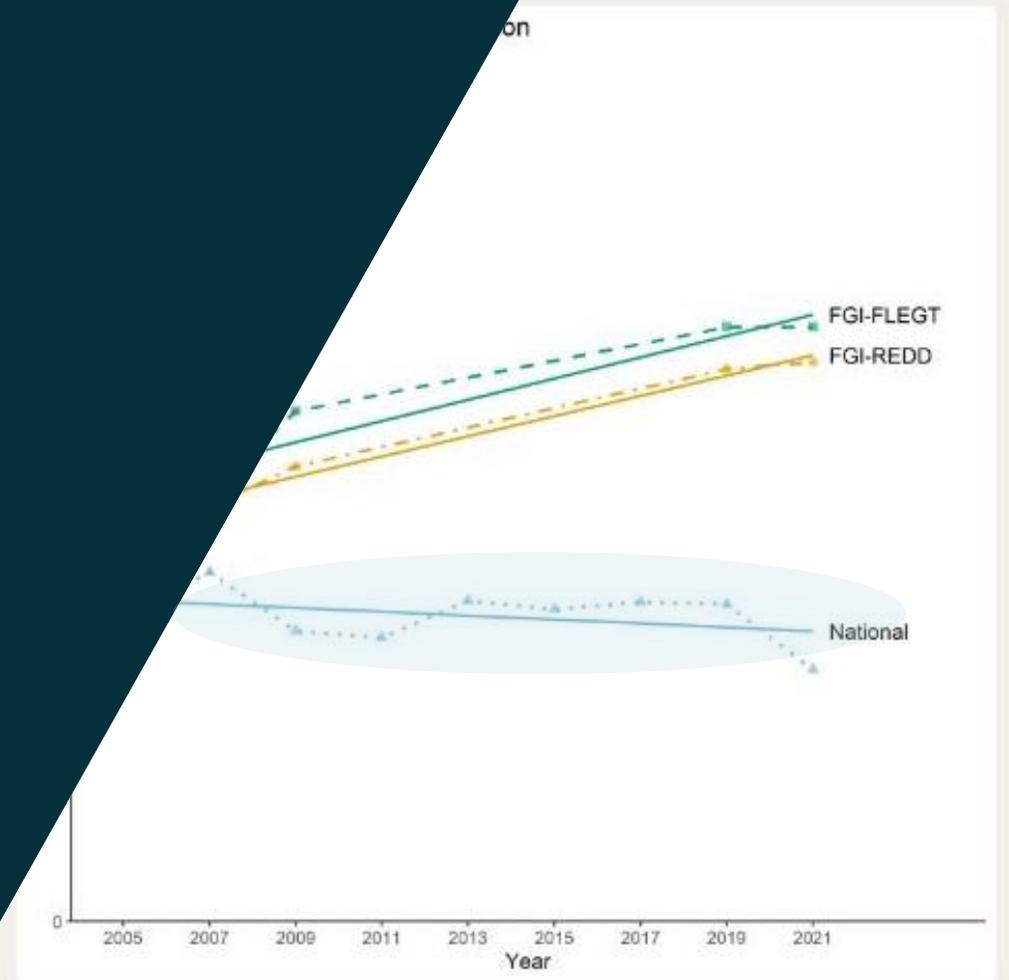
- **Improvements** in law enforcement in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and the Republic of the Congo in the past decade, in relation to:
  - Clearer **legal frameworks** to deal with non-compliance
  - more effective **use of enforcement actions**
- FLEGT VPAs contributed to the improvements
- Despite progress, there is **still work to be done** to clarify mandates and responses to non-compliance in the forest sector, and to apply enforcement measures consistently.



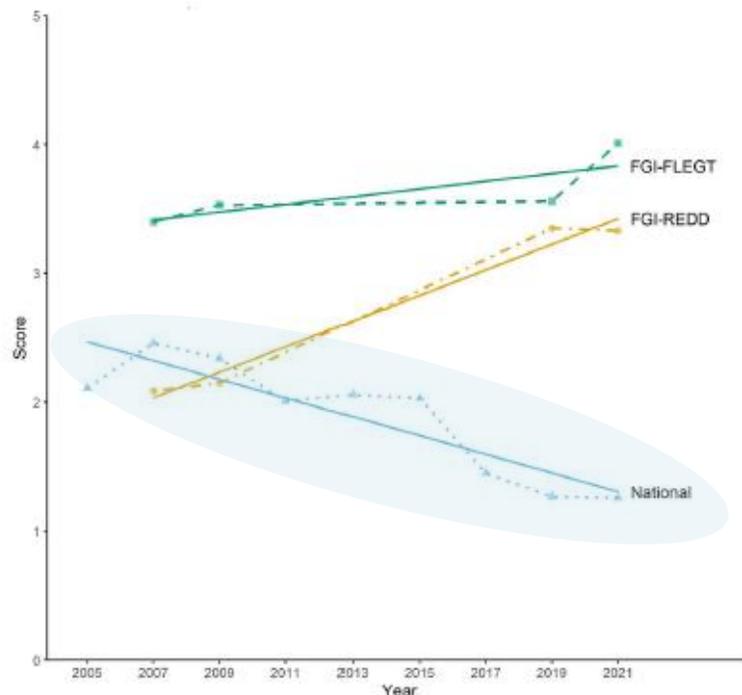
Improved then stalled in promotion of legal compliance and law enforcement Cameroon and the Republic of the Congo

# Trends

comparing the forest sector with national trends

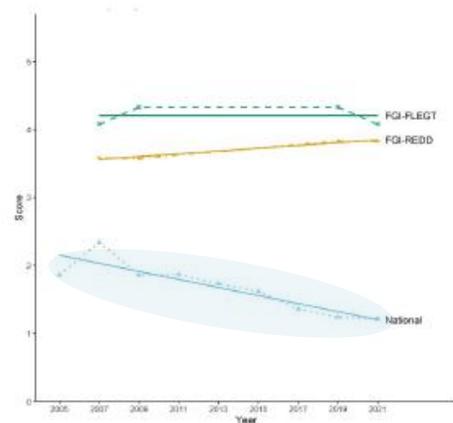


# Stakeholder participation

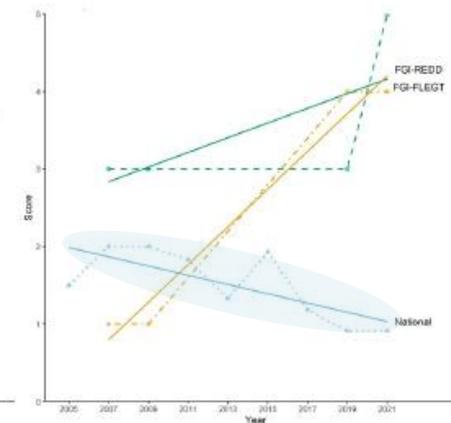


## An example from Cameroon

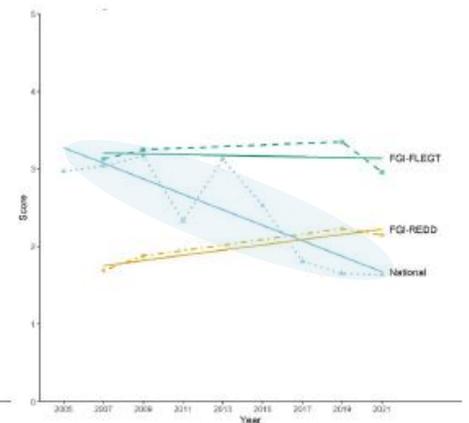
Slight decline at the national level. This contrasts with the FGI assessment, which indicates improvements for all the aspects of participation in the context of the forest sector



Foundations for participation



Active representation



Effective dialogue

- How to actively engage stakeholders in contributing to information? (online interface)
- Is there **anything we have missed** or that you would like to see assessed? (gender)
- What is a **good number** of ‘experts’ to validate the data? (15, CSOs are majority of contributors)
- How to best ensure **government buy-in** in the use of governance data?

# Thank you

If you want to

- Provide feedback
- Conduct your own assessments
- Collaborate with us

or for more information,

visit our website <https://fgi.efi.int/>

or send me an email at [iola.leal@efi.int](mailto:iola.leal@efi.int)

