



Options for forest verification



'Ownership' in Relation to the Design of Verification Systems

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Introduction

- **What are the strategies for developing verification systems which guarantee ownership?**
- **Why is ownership important? For long term sustainability and robustness of the verification system**
- **It goes beyond ‘participation’ and ‘support for’**
- **A working definition = ‘the active support of, and the ability to control, the design, process and outcomes of the verification system’**
- **Discussion of the experiences and dilemmas faced over this issue in the VERIFOR case studies**

Questions raised.....

The degree to which:

- 1. ...the objectives of the verification system determine the degree of ownership?**
- 2. ...government ownership is increased by engaging a broad section of public agencies and levels?**
- 3. ...government ownership reflects 'public' ownership?**
- 4. ...strengthening accountability and transparency mechanisms increases public ownership?**
- 5. ...broad ownership of the process is equally important during all stages?**
- 6. ...true ownership can be achieved when the impacts of the verification system are not perceived to be beneficial?**

Do the objectives of the verification system determine the degree of ownership?

- **Range of objectives & drivers**
 - Malaysia - pressure from industry & the state
 - Ecuador – internal social pressures
 - Cambodia & Cameroon – donor conditionalities
- **Some are complementary, others contradictory**
- **Can ownership be substituted for by pressures such as conditionality or market access?**
- **Can international agendas achieve national ownership?**
- **Verification systems based on access to the international market require approval by external stakeholders**
- **Can international monitoring engender ownership? Or can national ownership be encouraged simultaneously?**
 - Ghana

Matching national priorities and complementing existing institutions: does this increase ownership?

- **Strengthen complementarities with existing monitoring and auditing procedures**
 - **CITES – use of national reporting systems**
- **Harmonise with decentralised roles and responsibilities**
 - **Indonesia - mismatch between deconcentrated timber administration powers & laws on administrative decentralisation**
- **Match verification system design to capacity**
 - **Philippines, Kimberley Process, International Nuclear Safeguards overestimated capacity**
- **Is capacity building an essential element of ensuring ownership?**

Is government ownership increased by engaging a broad section of public agencies & decentralised levels ?

Participation by other government agencies can increase ownership

- Ecuador - isolation of the MoE**
- Indonesia - MoF lacks the mandate**
- Brazil - broad participation in verification processes**

Does government ownership reflect 'public' ownership?

- **Distinction between 'national' (government) ownership & public ownership**
- **Public legitimacy of state systems. How to build ownership where trust is low?**
- **Increasing participation & including of diversity of view points can increase public ownership e.g. Philippines**
- **But not always... consulting can merely give voice to a number of interest groups**
 - **Ecuador & Philippines – domination of elite voices**

How can public ownership be increased?

Through increasing access to accountability mechanisms

- e.g. Judicial review processes, media, dispute mechanisms
- Indonesia – Ombudsman Commission & active local parliamentary committees

Is strong ownership necessary at every stage?

- **Importance of ownership varies throughout verification system development**
 - **Ecuador - pushed through by reformers. Too rapid an introduction lead to rejection**
- **Ensuring broad ownership in the design can stall the process**

Can ownership can be achieved when the impacts of the VS are not perceived to be beneficial?

- **Ownership is not only achieved by the process but will be increased or decreased by the outcomes**
- **Honest consideration of the *distribution* of costs and benefits needed**
 - **Heavy transaction costs for small operators (Ecuador)**
 - **Unknown outcomes of signing up to international market-based mechanisms – who should bear the risks?**
 - **Risks of shifting legality standards**

Possible issues for discussion

- **What defines government ownership?**
- **To what extent does government ownership reflect 'public' ownership?**
- **What does 'ownership' mean in situations of low governance**
- **What mechanisms can increase public ownership of the verification system?**