

# Making the Forest Sector Transparent

## Annual Transparency Report 2010

June 2011

Global Witness this month publishes the second phase of its unique comparative study of transparency in the forest sectors of developing countries.

Research for the Forest Sector Annual Transparency Report for 2010 was conducted in five countries – Cameroon, Ecuador, Ghana, Liberia and Peru – between July and December 2010 by independent national NGOs and local partners. The programme uses a red-amber-green traffic light system to indicate which forest sector documents are in the public domain, and draws lessons for improvements on a national level. Data from each country against a common set of 78 transparency indicators is now available on the programme website: [www.foresttransparency.info](http://www.foresttransparency.info). For four countries, comparisons can be made between 2009 and 2010.

### Key findings

- The assessment shows little change between 2009 and 2010, and forest sector transparency remains generally poor. Eight clear instances of improvement, and four steps backwards were

recorded. There are some major areas where lack of disclosure is persistent and undermines governance and accountability. Often this is at a basic level, such as concession contracts, forest management plans, and the relationship between goods and services provided, and revenues generated and redistributed.

- The most significant positive change is in access to decision-making by ordinary citizens. The dynamics are of course different in different countries but in all cases there is a difference in how communities are increasingly at the core of decisions about their forests, from grass-roots empowerment right up to national-level policy-making.
- Whilst forest sector transparency is increasingly recognised as an issue and discussed openly, the regulatory frameworks for ‘carbon concessions’ or land deals remain almost non-existent, and a dangerous policy vacuum prevails. There is a real risk in this situation that governments and their people will be locked in to unfavourable contracts.

#### Positive change

	Cameroon	The first ever National Forest Forum was held
	Ghana	A Freedom of Information bill was tabled in parliament
	Liberia	A forest forum process was initiated
	Liberia	A Freedom of Information Act was passed
	Peru	The forest authority website was relaunched
	Peru	A range of discussion forums have been instituted
	Peru	Generalised maps of forest permits have become available
	Peru	An economic ecological zoning protocol has been written

#### Steps backwards

	Cameroon	Non-transparent allocation of small permit areas increased
	Ghana	Inappropriate use of salvage permits increased
	Liberia	Lack of transparency over development of REDD+ policies
	Peru	Repeal of controversial law also withdrew some progressive elements

This material has been funded by UKaid from the Department for International Development (DFID), however the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the department's official policies.



**Legal access to information**  
A Freedom of Information Act was adopted in 2010 and the appointment of an Information Commissioner is awaited. All state agencies will need to appoint an information officer. [Read more...](#)

**Transparent Decision Making**  
The implementation regulations for the Community Rights Law will empower communities to play a more central role in forest decision making. [Read more...](#)

**Tenure and Land Use**  
A significant percentage of forest land in Liberia is under titles and could be clearly identified, but the situation with forest land held under customary arrangement remains unclear. [Read more...](#)

**Key transparency indicators**

- Freedom of Information Law?
- Is the Forest Law available?
- Land ownership maps public?
- Logging volumes public?
- Mining vs forestry strategy?
- Community funds consultation?
- Any national forest forum?
- Permit documents public?
- Revenues redistributed public?

**Other Facts**



**Vital Statistics**

People  
125 per km<sup>2</sup> of forest

Corruption Perception Index  
3.3 / 10

Income  
GDP per capita US\$222

**World Bank Governance Indicators**

- Control of Corruption
- Rule of Law
- Regulatory Quality
- Government Effectiveness
- Political Stability
- Voice and Accountability

**Impact of extra-sectoral activities in forests**



Several large-scale mining and monoculture agricultural concessions have been allocated. Large-scale agricultural concessions intensify conversion of natural forests and increase the rate of deforestation. [Read more...](#)

**Links**

- Contact
- References
- Data
- Updates
- Methodology
- Lessons Learnt

Liberia

**Legal access to information**  
Although the right to information is clearly recognised by Constitution, lack of a legal framework means communities struggle to obtain information from public services. [Read more...](#)

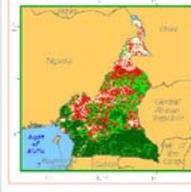
**Transparent Decision Making**  
The first substantive National Forest Forum took place in March 2010, with some one thousand participants debating various and raising them directly with officials. [Read more...](#)

**Tenure and Land Use**  
Forest lands are under clear legal ownership by the state or the municipalities. This is contested by communities, who claim ownership on all the forest lands and resources. [Read more...](#)

**Key transparency indicators**

- Freedom of Information Law?
- Is the Forest Law available?
- Land ownership maps public?
- Logging volumes public?
- Mining vs forestry strategy?
- Community funds consultation?
- Any national forest forum?
- Revenues redistributed public?

**Other Facts**



**Vital Statistics**

People  
54 per km<sup>2</sup> of forest

Corruption Perception Index  
2.2 / 10

Income  
GDP per capita US\$1137

**World Bank Governance Indicators**

- Control of Corruption
- Rule of Law
- Regulatory Quality
- Government Effectiveness
- Political Stability
- Voice and Accountability

**Impact of extra-sectoral activities in forests**



In one area, there can be three layers of overlapping rights: customary rights, commercial logging rights, and rights to subsoil resources (oil, gas minerals). This is a key threat to forests and to the rights granted to communities by the forest law. [Read more...](#)

**Links**

- Contact
- References
- Data
- Updates
- Methodology
- Lessons Learnt

Cameroon

**Tenure and Land Use**  
The property registry is being decentralised to sub-national governments. At the same time, free prior informed consent is included in the draft consultation law. [Read more...](#)

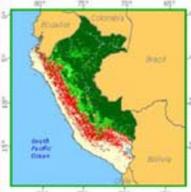
**Transparent Decision Making**  
The draft consultation law awaits adoption by the Executive. When passed, it will ensure the government consults indigenous peoples and civil society on any new legislation. [Read more...](#)

**Legal access to information**  
Average compliance with access to information legislation by government institutions is about 50%. That of the forest supervisor OSINFOR increased from 2% to 48% in 2010. [Read more...](#)

**Key transparency indicators**

- Revenues redistributed public?
- Permit documents public?
- Any national forest forum?
- Community funds consultation?
- Mining vs forestry strategy?
- Logging volumes public?
- Land ownership maps public?
- Is the Forest Law available?
- Freedom of Information Law?

**Other Facts**



**Vital Statistics**

People  
32 per km<sup>2</sup> of forest

Corruption Perception Index  
3.5 / 10

Income  
GDP per capita US\$4469

**World Bank Governance Indicators**

- Control of Corruption
- Rule of Law
- Regulatory Quality
- Government Effectiveness
- Political Stability
- Voice and Accountability

**Impact of extra-sectoral activities in forests**



The Ministry of Environment developed policy guidelines on ecological economic zoning to help reorient economic activities and avoid socio-environmental conflicts that result from overlapping permits and inappropriate uses. [Read more...](#)

**Links**

- Contact
- References
- Data
- Updates
- Methodology
- Lessons Learnt

Peru

**Legal access to information**  
Draft Freedom of Information Bill made no progress in 2010. Forestry Commission has a Service Charter, but no apparent performance monitoring against it takes place. [Read more...](#)

**Transparent Decision Making**  
Reinvigorated forest forums in some districts provide opportunity for citizens input into policy discussions. No legal mechanism for public participation in policy. [Read more...](#)

**Tenure and Land Use**  
Forest tenure lacks clarity due to complicated land ownership hierarchy, including customary and traditional norms. Issue recognised as a priority but no substantive discussion or progress. [Read more...](#)

**Key transparency indicators**

- Revenues redistributed public?
- Any national forest forum?
- Community funds consultation?
- Mining vs forestry strategy?
- Logging volumes public?
- Permit documents public?
- Land ownership maps public?
- Is the Forest Law available?
- Freedom of Information law?

**Other Facts**



**Vital Statistics**

People  
432 per km<sup>2</sup> of forest

Corruption Perception Index  
4.1 / 10

Income  
GDP per capita US\$1098

**World Bank Governance Indicators**

- Control of Corruption
- Rule of Law
- Regulatory Quality
- Government Effectiveness
- Political Stability
- Voice and Accountability

**Opaque permit regimes**



A remarkably large number of salvage permits were issued in 2010 in a process that lacked transparency or a competitive bidding process. Ghana Forest Watch estimated some US\$10 million was lost in uncollected revenue as a result. [Read more...](#)

**Links**

- Contact
- References
- Data
- Updates
- Methodology
- Lessons Learnt

Ghana