

Fourth Annual Report Web Update

GTF219 Global Witness

Making the Forest Sector Transparent is working with civil society groups in seven forest-rich countries to engage with policy makers and advocate for capable, responsive and accountable forest sector governance.

The programme has developed the first ever transparency report card for the forest sector through a 'participatory action research' process with local NGOs: [CED](#) (Cameroon), [CIKOD](#) (Ghana), [DAR](#) (Peru), [SDI](#) (Liberia), [Grupo FARO](#) (Ecuador), [Ut'z Che'](#) (Guatemala), and [RRN](#) (Democratic Republic of Congo). The annual report card is web-based (www.foresttransparency.info), and assesses 20 transparency indicators on the level of public access to information and decision making. It provides a tool for civil society to improve analysis of forest governance and transparency issues and to design strategies to tackle them. In four of these countries annual report cards have now been produced for three consecutive years, so they have begun to benchmark performance over time.

A key programme aim is to provide a framework and a 'pick-up-and-go' tool that civil society can use without direct support from us to demand transparency over the management of forest resources. This has already been the case with the Nepal Livelihoods and Forestry Programme using the Report Card methodology to produce their report [Transparency in Nepal Forest's Sector](#). In 2012 we will also produce report cards that assess the commitments, point-by-point, that governments have made to publish information through [Voluntary Partnership Agreements](#) (VPAs) with the European Union.

The report cards are being used by the programme partners and other civil society activists to galvanise change from their own governments. Successes include:

- In Cameroon, our programme Partner CED led the civil society contribution to the [forest law reform process](#), consolidating a set of proposed amendments and obtaining their endorsement by a network of parliamentarians working on forest issues.
- In the DRC, our programme partner, RRN, has improved access to information and [respect for community rights](#) in the conversion process of forest titles, both on the ground and in the political process (see Annex A9).
- In Ecuador, intervention by Grupo FARO, Global Witness and others helped ensure the [US\\$4m committed by the UN](#) for a climate change strategy will help address issues of transparency, accountability and participation.
- In Ghana, a *Traditional Authorities Transparency and Accountability* Charter is being piloted to strengthen governance within customary community structures that are responsible for investing a share of forest sector tax revenues.
- In Guatemala, Ut'z Che' successfully lobbied for much greater [public participation in the REDD+ process](#), defining the way in which important international agreements will be implemented in the country.
- In Liberia, the [recently signed VPA](#) to ensure only legal timber is traded with Europe had the largest civil society representation of any such bilateral agreement so far, thanks to the work of SDI and the NGO Coalition.
- In Peru, DAR played a major technical and mediation role in the [drafting of a bill](#) for obtaining free prior and informed consultation with ordinary citizens, including indigenous peoples.

For more information:

The programme website is available in three languages: www.foresttransparency.info (English), www.transparenceforestiere.info (French) and www.transparenciaforestal.info (Spanish). The programme is also outlined on Global Witness' website www.globalwitness.org/gtf

The first-fourth Annual Reports, and the MTR, are published on both the [Global Witness](#) website and the [programme](#) website.



Community of Maringo village, Equateur Province, DRC, after an interview with Global Witness and RRN on their experience of the forest titles conversion process. The community's social agreement with the logging company ITB specifies that the company is to construct 50 houses, education and health facilities and purchase cattle for the community in exchange for their exploitation of the surrounding forest.

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Members of a Baka Community in Cameroon

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