

7th Executive Forest Policy Course, 12 – 23 May 2014 | Nadi, Fiji

PEOPLE, LAND USE AND FORESTRY IN THE PACIFIC: POLICY CHALLENGES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Module 6

Governance, accountability and transparency in the forest sector

Improving forest governance:
Experience in the Pacific

Don Gilmour/ Yurdi Yasmi



Outline of governance session 2

- Brainstorming exercise (10 minutes)
- Brief presentation (20 minutes)
- Group work (20 minutes)
- Presentation and discussion of results of group work (10 minutes)

Brainstorming exercise

The previous session outlined the disadvantages of weak governance and the benefits of strong governance.

What pressures exist in participant's countries to improve and strengthen governance (i.e. to improve Transparency, Participation, Accountability, Coordination and Capacity)?

Context of governance in the Pacific

- Many countries in the region have a highly fragmented society with rural villagers often locally governed by indigenous practices and customs.
- Difficult to integrate government systems into traditional clan structures.
- Difficult to move beyond “big man” syndrome at all levels (central to local).
- Challenge to move beyond narrowly focused forestry “silo.”
- Intense competition for natural resources.

Pressures to strengthen governance

- Three patterns are emerging that impinge on governance:
 - Rise in the use of IT and greatly improved communications can “shine a light” on examples of weak governance such as lack of transparency and accountability, illegal practices, etc.
 - Emergence of alliances between academia, NGOs and CBOs (people affected by weak governance are having their voices heard),
 - Development and application of processes such as FLEGT Action Plan, VPAs, certification, etc. that contribute towards developing and applying systems and processes that strengthen governance.

Some essential/enabling factors

Reforming governance requires:

- Political will, good leadership and champions.
- Multi-stakeholder engagement to develop consensus on reforms and to help drive through reforms.
- Availability of approaches such as FLEGT, Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) and Certification (FSC, etc.).

Group work

- List constraints to strengthening governance in your countries
- Suggest how governance can be strengthened (i.e. How can the constraints be addressed?)

Thank you

