



**FOREST GOVERNANCE LEARNING GROUP IN SOUTH AFRICA:  
Enabling practical, just and sustainable forest use**

**WORK PLAN  
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## 1. Introduction

Many lists of ingredients for good governance in forests are available. The challenge is therefore not *what* but *how* to put the right leadership, institutions, policy decisions and practical systems in place. The Forest Governance Learning Group (FGLG) aims to respond to this challenge. FGLG is an alliance of independent agencies in Africa and Asia, aiming to exchange and spread learning about enabling practical, just and sustainable forest use. It is coordinated by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). South Africa is one of the African States where the FGLG is active<sup>1</sup>.

Internationally, the work of the forest governance learning group covers four outputs:

- **Output 1.** *Poverty reduction strategies, national forest programmes, decentralisation programmes* and related processes that better enable improved forest governance
- **Output 2.** *Illegal and corrupt forestry that degrades livelihoods is reduced* through the adoption and spread of practical approaches to improve forest governance
- **Output 3.** *Forestry enterprise initiatives and private sector associations* that comply with the law and spread practical approaches to improve forest governance
- **Output 4.** *Ownership, access rights, policy and management frameworks* that are improved to support local control and benefit from forestry

The purpose of the work is threefold: to (i) spread learning about workable approaches to good forest governance; (ii) make measurable progress in improving sustainable local returns to livelihoods from law enforcement, private sector responsibility and enhanced local ownership and access rights; and (iii) build long-term capacity to spread these improvements.

## 2. Focus in South Africa

In South Africa, a key issue in forestry<sup>2</sup> is to expand control and benefits to a broader base of people, particularly to poorer people to improve their opportunities, incomes and livelihoods. This priority is recognised by government in (a) the poverty reduction principles in all departmental policies and (b) the broad-based black economic empowerment (BBBEE) initiative.

In provinces where forestry could expand to benefit a greater number of people (KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape in particular), potential small-scale foresters (as growers, employees or contractors) are constrained from entering or expanding forestry operations because of the tangle of institutions and regulations at the local level. The roles and responsibilities of the various institutions involved – in particular municipalities, but also others including traditional leadership and government offices such as Land Affairs (DLA) or Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAFF) – are not always clear. The lack of clarity is due in part to a simple lack of information among local people, but is also due to real transitional contradictions and overlaps in roles and responsibilities.

Therefore it is proposed that the FGLG in South Africa tackles questions around the **roles and responsibilities of stakeholder institutions** in increasing the potential for poor people to achieve a greater share of benefits from forestry.

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<sup>1</sup> For an overview of the work of the FGLG internationally see [www.iied.org/NR/forestry/projects/forest.html](http://www.iied.org/NR/forestry/projects/forest.html). A CD-ROM of all documentation produced by the Group in its inception phase 2003-2004 is available from [forestry@iied.org](mailto:forestry@iied.org)

<sup>2</sup> Forestry in this context includes plantations, natural forest and woodlands.

A current window of opportunity to ensure that the activities of the FGLG feed directly into provincial and national processes is the development of the Small Forest Enterprises' Support Policy by DWAF and other implementing agencies. This policy is analogous to the Assistance to Resource Poor Irrigation Farmers' Policy<sup>3</sup> in terms of Sections 61 and 62 of the National Water Act (NWA) of 1998. It will however go beyond the framework of the NWA to include other critical issues and components for small forest enterprises' development..

### 3. Aims and objectives of the FGLG in South Africa

The overall aim of the FGLG in SA is to ***clarify the roles and responsibilities of different institutions in enabling small-scale forestry operations***. The FGLG will work through a country learning group, explained in more detail in a later section. To achieve the overall aim of the FGLG in South Africa, the objectives of the country learning group will be to:

- Discuss and promote practical governance solutions among relevant institutions
- Enable participatory problem identification, analysis and suggestion of policy options around the roles and responsibilities of stakeholder institutions in widening the benefits and control of forestry – leading to integrated policy processes and research, rather than duplication<sup>4</sup>
- Expose group members, especially those who do not work formally within the forest sector, to practical discussion and learning on forest governance
- Share practical examples of good practices
- Produce and roll-out practical guidance and/or governance tools for relevant institutions
- Recommend training sessions and targeted learning events
- Advocate among government and industry at various levels and thereby link ground experience into central policy directions
- Provide targeted inputs into policy and strategic processes additional to the Small Forest Enterprises' Support Strategy, such as the national forest programme (nfp), provincial growth and development strategies (PGDS) and integrated development plans (IDP)
- Influence commitments of group members to implement and take forward recommendations made and agreed to by the group

The learning group will be organised to provide stimulus and direction to DWAF's Small Forest Enterprises' Support Policy (SFESP). However, the objectives of the learning group are not to provide a "call-down" service to DWAF, but rather to stimulate practical governance solutions and policy implementation among a wide set of agencies and individuals. Hence the outputs of the learning group will emphasise:

- Action points and recommendations for the whole of the learning group and the full set of institutions whose rights and responsibilities are under discussion, not only for DWAF
- Practical governance solutions and means of policy implementation, rather than formulation of further policy

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<sup>3</sup> For an overview of the policy see [www.dwaf.pwv.gov.za](http://www.dwaf.pwv.gov.za)

<sup>4</sup> E.g. recent work, on streamlining stream flow reduction licensing, on opportunities for forestry in municipalities across the country, on the potential of different models of small-scale timber growing for poverty reduction, on the potential of contracting for poverty reduction (much relevant research work has been sponsored by the WFSP)

#### **4. Themes and key questions**

The Small Forest Enterprises' Support Policy (SFESP) provides an organising framework for the themes of the FGLG in South Africa. The aim of this support policy is to provide (and/or endorse) required resources, and to clarify roles and responsibilities amongst relevant agencies. Components of the SFESP might include, but are not limited to:

- Capturing new opportunities for forest enterprises;
- Forest enterprise(s) development (e.g. growing, contracting, non-timber forest product enterprises);
- Management of forest enterprises;
- Skills and capacity development (organisational, technical, business, etc);
- Provision of services (extension, business, etc);
- Endorsement and/or provision of incentives (licensing charges, water use charges, property rates, minimum wages, environmental impact assessments, heritage studies, etc);
- Preliminary or remedial socio-economic viability exercises;
- Others (those given above are a basis for triggering the learning group's thoughts);

To give a better idea of the scope of the FGLG's activities, two areas of the component "Capturing new opportunities for forest enterprise" are expanded below: (1) land tenure and redistribution and (2) alternative business models.

##### **4.1 Land tenure and redistribution**

Land tenure matters most where land is of commercial value – for mining, for agriculture, or in the area of interest here, for forestry (whether timber production or high value NTFPs). In these scenarios, local people may need to clarify or secure their land rights and/or acquire more land in order to:

- Receive rents from larger-scale forestry companies operating on their land (this usually entails a land restitution claim);
- Enter into individual or communal forestry production;
- Expand their operations.

Many communities in KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape have not yet secured their land rights on forest land. The division of responsibility between various institutions in this process – including DLA, DWAF, district municipalities, local municipalities, traditional leadership and new community institutions (trusts, cooperatives, committees, etc) is not very clear.

Key questions for the FGLG on land tenure and distribution in South Africa include:

- Where have communities been successful in securing land rights, and exercising these rights, and what approaches and tactics did they use in these cases?
- How did various institutions, including those listed above as well as NGOs and forestry companies, help or hinder such processes?
- While DLA needs to provide the final approval, what can communities and their supporters do independently without relying on DLA to facilitate such processes?
- What role is there for legal tools in securing land tenure?
- What non-legal tools (e.g. lobbying, publicity, etc) have proven effective?
- What other lessons can be taken forward from experiences to date?

## 4.2 *Alternative business models*

Rural communities may well be able to access business equity and jobs through other means than the established routes of community-based or individual plantations and employment in forestry companies or under forestry contractors.

The Bonagude-Manzini Partnership is an interesting example in which the forestry workers of the middle-sized estate are also shareholders in the business<sup>5</sup>. There is scope for expanding the number of shares, adding to the BBBEE potential of the scheme, and the Standard Bank was keen to finance the scheme, contributing to its own BBBEE charter.

Key questions for the FGLG on alternative business models in South Africa include:

- What can be learnt from a SWOT analysis of business models, such as Bonakude-Manzini, Cata and Platt Estate, to adapt, improve and apply these models?
- What can labour tenants, workers and/or rural communities do proactively to develop new kinds of joint ventures?
- What are (can be) the roles of different institutions in distributing and managing information around new business opportunities and providing business support and training?
- How can the BBBEE charters of finance, forestry, agriculture and others, be harnessed to provide new business opportunities for small-scale growers, contractors, job-seekers, entrepreneurs and landowners?

## 5. **Methodology of the FGLG in South Africa**

The learning group in South Africa will take an informal, flexible and broad-based structure to create opportunities for engagement among groups who do not otherwise have forums to confer on forest governance. The group will include a mix of junior to senior professionals, of local municipality to national-level representatives, and of forestry and non-forestry practitioners. A special emphasis will be put on engaging members of staff in municipalities and government departments at and below province level to broaden their learning on practical forest governance issues relevant to their work responsibilities, plus to feed up from their field experience to higher policy levels.

Group members will include a mix of “core” and “call-in” members. The learning group is not intended to be a formal, representative structure and hence the core membership will not attempt to provide comprehensive coverage across agencies and geographical areas. Instead it will be an agile and provocative group able to provoke and stimulate governance, rather than to provide the fully legitimated multi-stakeholder position.

“Core” members of the group will include:

- Officials in district municipalities and local municipalities in areas with high forestry potential;
- DWAF staff from cluster and national levels;
- Civil servants in other relevant government departments (e.g. Land Affairs and Finance and Economic Development);
- Small-scale and medium-scale growers and contractors;

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<sup>5</sup> For full details, see Howard, M., Matikinca, P., Mitchell, D., Brown, F., Lewis, F., Mahlangu, I., Msimang, A., Nixon P. and Radebe, T. (2005) Small-scale timber production in South Africa: what role in reducing poverty? Fractal Forest Africa, Fakisandla Consulting, Institute of Natural Resources, Rural Forest Management cc, South Africa, and International Institute for Environment and Development, London, UK.

- Dynamic individuals without representative status who can bring fresh stimulus to the group, from outside the usual professional or sectoral boundaries.

“Call-in” members of the group might include:

- Community-level representatives;
- Representatives of development-oriented NGOs and people’s organisations, including those which do not have a primary focus on forestry;
- Representatives of large-scale grower-processors;
- Financiers and insurance agencies;
- Experts in particular subject areas.

The group will work through a series of learning cycles. Each learning cycle will focus on one component of the Small Forest Enterprises’ Support Strategy and will have its own set of specific outputs within the overarching aim of the FGLG. A typical cycle will be organised around a one-day learning event (workshop), following a carefully designed action-oriented workshop agenda. Build-up to the workshop will involve preparation of one or more briefs outlining the theme, intended outputs and key activities for the event, plus all essential background information. Briefs will be 2-3 pages in length (where more information is needed, several shorter briefs rather than one long document will be prepared). Where appropriate, a specific case study will be used, with the intention not only of learning from the case study, but also of moving the case forward.

The convenor will maintain the group, convene workshops, distribute information regularly and maintain momentum. The convenor will take responsibility for taking membership of the group beyond the obvious candidates who already interact regularly on forestry issues to a wider set of active agencies and individuals. The first convenor will be in position for 18 months, at which point there will be a review. The first convenor may then continue or the option may be taken to circulate the coordination responsibility to another agency to enhance flexibility and the sense of group ownership. Steven Ngubane of Forestry South Africa will be the first convenor.

## 6. Outputs of the FGLG in South Africa

The Forest Governance Learning Group in South Africa will deliver on all four of the international outputs of the FGLG (see introduction). Specific outputs are listed below under these international outputs, and are linked to activities in the logical framework in Appendix 3.

- **Output 1.** *Poverty reduction strategies, national forest programmes, decentralisation programmes* and related processes that better enable improved forest governance
  - Small Forest Enterprises’ Support Policy developed and installed within all key agencies and among small-scale forest enterprises;
  - Roles and responsibilities of agencies in supporting small-scale forest enterprises clarified;
  - Strategic technical inputs made to the nfp;
  - Targeted recommendations delivered to provincial growth and development strategies (PGDS) and integrated development plans (IDP) at provincial and district levels respectively;
  - Capacity building through broad-based learning events.
- **Output 2.** *Illegal and corrupt forestry that degrades livelihoods is reduced* through the adoption and spread of practical approaches to improve forest governance

- Small Forest Enterprises' Support Policy developed and installed within all key agencies and among small-scale forest enterprises, enabling legal practice;
- Roles and responsibilities of agencies in licensing (and other relevant legal processes) for small forest enterprises clarified and streamlined;
- Incentives for legal and viable small-scale forest enterprises agreed and installed.
- **Output 3.** *Forestry enterprise initiatives and private sector associations* that comply with the law and spread practical approaches to improve forest governance
  - Small Forest Enterprises' Support Policy developed and installed within all key agencies and among small-scale forest enterprises, enabling legally compliant start-up and viability of small-scale business initiatives;
  - Roles and responsibilities of agencies in supporting small-scale forest enterprises clarified;
  - Representative organisations for small-scale forest enterprises supported and their capacity developed.
- **Output 4.** *Ownership, access rights, policy and management frameworks* that are improved to support local control and benefit from forestry
  - Small Forest Enterprises' Support Policy developed and installed within all key agencies and among small-scale forest enterprises, providing appropriate policy and management frameworks to support local control and benefit from forestry;
  - Roles and responsibilities of agencies in supporting small-scale forest enterprises to advance ownership and secure land rights on forest land clarified;
  - Site-specific participatory reviews of land tenure and forest resource access for case-based learning.

## 7. Activities towards the outputs and objectives of the FGLG in South Africa

### **Convene Forestry Governance Learning Group**

- Identify group members
  - Identify potential “core” membership, including members from each of the following:
    - DWAF national level
    - DWAF cluster levels (EC & KZN)
    - District and local municipalities
    - Small-growers' forum (self-selected representative)
    - Small contractor sector (possibly both a representative and a non-representative “bright spark”)
    - Small grower sector (possibly both a representative and a non-representative “bright spark”)
    - One or more dynamic individuals without representative status who can bring fresh stimulus to the group, from outside the usual professional or sectoral boundaries
    - DLA or Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) – probably the latter
  - Identify potential “call-in” membership
  - Compile and maintain contacts list
- Sensitise and mobilise learning group members
  - Approach core members, stressing the informal, non-representative (non-mandate) nature of the group and its overall objective to clarify the roles and

- responsibilities of different institutions in enabling small-scale forestry operations, leading to outputs for the Small Forest Enterprises' Support Policy as well as for all other involved agencies
- Share FGLG-SA workplan with core membership
- Find out the aims, needs and recommendations of the core membership
- Define scope for first cycle of FGLG-SA
  - Agree objectives and intended output of the first cycle of the FGLG, in terms of the components of the Small Forest Enterprises' Support Policy
  - Ensure general consensus and full information sharing among core membership

***Learning cycle (general set of activities to apply to each learning cycle)***

- Plan workshop
  - Define very clear set of objectives and outputs for the learning cycle, within the overall objective of clarifying roles and responsibilities of different agencies and the components of the Small Forest Enterprises' Support Policy
  - Define necessary elements to achieve objectives and outputs
- Prepare materials for workshop
  - Prepare one or more 2-3 page briefs to provide information on current roles and responsibilities, existing strategies/frameworks, challenges, any other relevant background information
  - Prepare clear statement of objectives and outputs of workshop
  - Prepare case study material where relevant
  - Send out all briefs well ahead of time
- Convene workshop
  - Design programme of action-oriented workshop activities to best achieve agreed objectives and outputs
  - Invite any relevant "call-in" members and guests as well as "core" members
  - Set up logistics, including translation where needed (for larger-scale workshops including a greater number of small growers and contractors)
  - Hold workshop
- Follow through
  - Document proceedings of workshop, including commitments made at the workshop by group members (with timeframes for action)
  - Prepare targeted outputs for Small Forest Enterprises' Support Policy and other relevant processes such as PGDS and IDP
  - Feeding into DWAF national office
  - Use other pathways for other group members to take action, as agreed at workshop
  - Keep members in touch one-on-one and through electronic media as needed
  - Prepare quarterly report on activities and outputs of FGLG-SA

The exact activities of any learning cycle will depend on its specific objectives and outputs. In some cases there may be a need for more thorough build-up and briefing to bring everyone up to speed on a particular component of the Small Forest Enterprises' Support Policy. Different learning cycles may also require getting different people involved at different times. Some may need longer workshops or more than one workshop (e.g. a larger-scale event for broad-based learning among operators of small-scale forest enterprises).

At least one case-based event will be held, in parallel with the learning cycles organised around the components of the Small Forest Enterprises' Support Policy. This case-based event will consider one or more "alternative business model" case studies, to consider the real practicalities of applying it in other circumstances: pros and cons, costs, risks, capital needed, legal processes needed, etc.

## **8. Timeframe and review**

This workplan will be monitored and revised as work progresses. The Forest Governance Learning Group in South Africa will run in two phases, each for 18 months. Within the first 18 months phase there will be four learning cycles and a case-based learning event, as described earlier. After 18 months the group will review its approach and progress. The structure and functioning of the group may then be changed accordingly, including selection of a second convening agency if appropriate.