

Governance Enhancement Tactics – Self-Evaluation Tool

GET-SET



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Acknowledgements

This toolkit has been financed through the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF), which is hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and involves a co-management partnership of the FAO, IIED, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and AgriCord. FFF is funded by the governments of Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden and by the FAO and European Union's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FAO-EU FLEGT) programme, and IKEA.

About the Forest and Farm Facility

This toolkit has been prepared for the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF). FFF is a partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and AgriCord. Since 2012, the FFF has provided financial support and technical assistance to forest and farm producer organisations (FFPOs), aiming to empower smallholder farmers, Indigenous communities, rural women's groups and others to manage their land sustainably and improve their livelihoods while protecting forests. The FFF primarily works by strengthening the capacity of FFPOs, for example to enable them to advocate for better policies and access markets, combat deforestation and enhance climate resilience, and promote inclusive governance within forest and farm landscapes.

Cover image: members of the Itsoseng community cluster in Kachikau Village, Chobe District, Northern Botswana, engage in discussions about internal governance (May 2025). Credit: Stephen Mwangi/IIED

Published by IIED, June 2025

Mwangi, S and Macqueen, D (2025) Governance Enhancement Tactics — Self-Evaluation Tool. IIED, London.
iied.org/22653iied

ISBN 978-1-83759-154-1

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Abbreviations

FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal
FFF	Forest and Farm Facility
FFPOs	Forest and farm producer organisations
GET-SET	Governance Enhancement Tactics — Self-Evaluation Tool
NGOs	Nongovernmental organisations

Introduction

Effective internal governance is crucial for organisational success, yet many organisations still struggle with implementing strong governance practices. A recent global survey conducted by the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF)¹ across six countries (Ecuador, Ghana, Kenya, Nepal, Vietnam and Zambia) identified internal governance as a key knowledge gap among 41 forest and farm producer organisations (FFPOs) (see Box 1).²

The Governance Enhancement Tactics — Self-Evaluation Tool (GET-SET) aims to stimulate structured reflection by managers and staff of FFPOs on how to improve their current internal governance structures, systems and practices, based on insights from leading FFPOs and other internal governance experts.³

Box 1. What are forest and farm producer organisations (FFPOs)?

- Forest and farm producers are women and men, smallholder families, Indigenous Peoples and local communities who have strong relationships with forests and farms in forested landscapes. Such producers grow, manage, harvest and process a wide range of natural resource-based goods, and services for subsistence use and for sale in local, national or international markets.
 - FFPOs are formal or informal associations of such producers. They are created with the aim of helping their members share knowledge and experience; engage in policy advocacy; secure tenure and access rights to forest, land and other natural resources; improve forest and farm management; expand markets; build enterprises; and increase income and well-being.
 - FFPOs often play a key role in sustainable development efforts, particularly in tackling climate change and preserving biodiversity within forest landscapes.
 - There can be up to three tiers of FFPOs, ranging from first-tier local-level organisations to second-tier regional groups, and third-tier national or international federations of FFPOs.
-

Using the GET-SET tool, FFPOs will move from identifying their internal governance challenges towards finding solutions. GET-SET draws on a literature review of articles and instruments relating to organisational governance, including prior tools and checklists developed by FFF, and is enriched by detailed insights from the governance practices of six high-performing FFPOs from Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America.

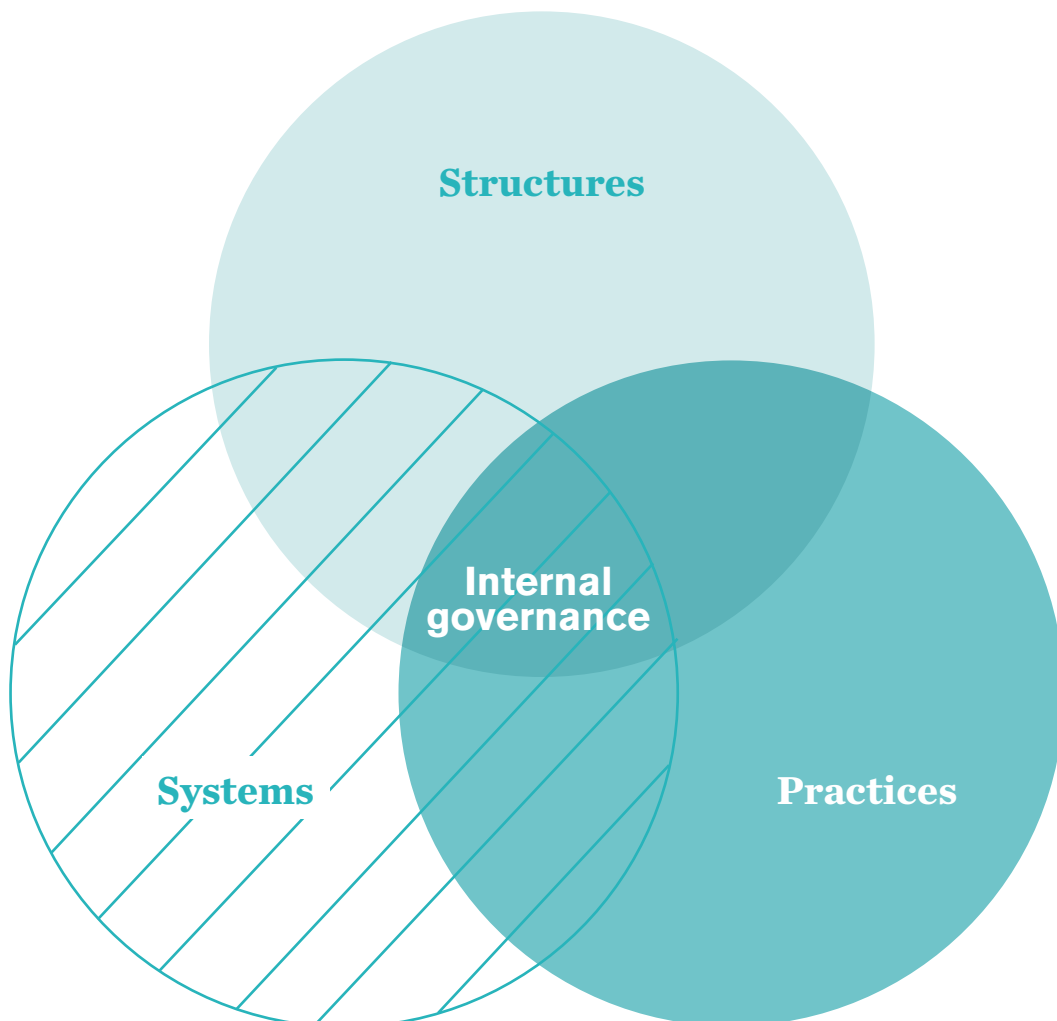


What is internal governance?

At its core, governance is about who holds the power to make decisions, how those decisions are enforced and the relationships through which power is exerted. The arrangement of roles, responsibilities and relationships in an organisational structure is the key to good governance.

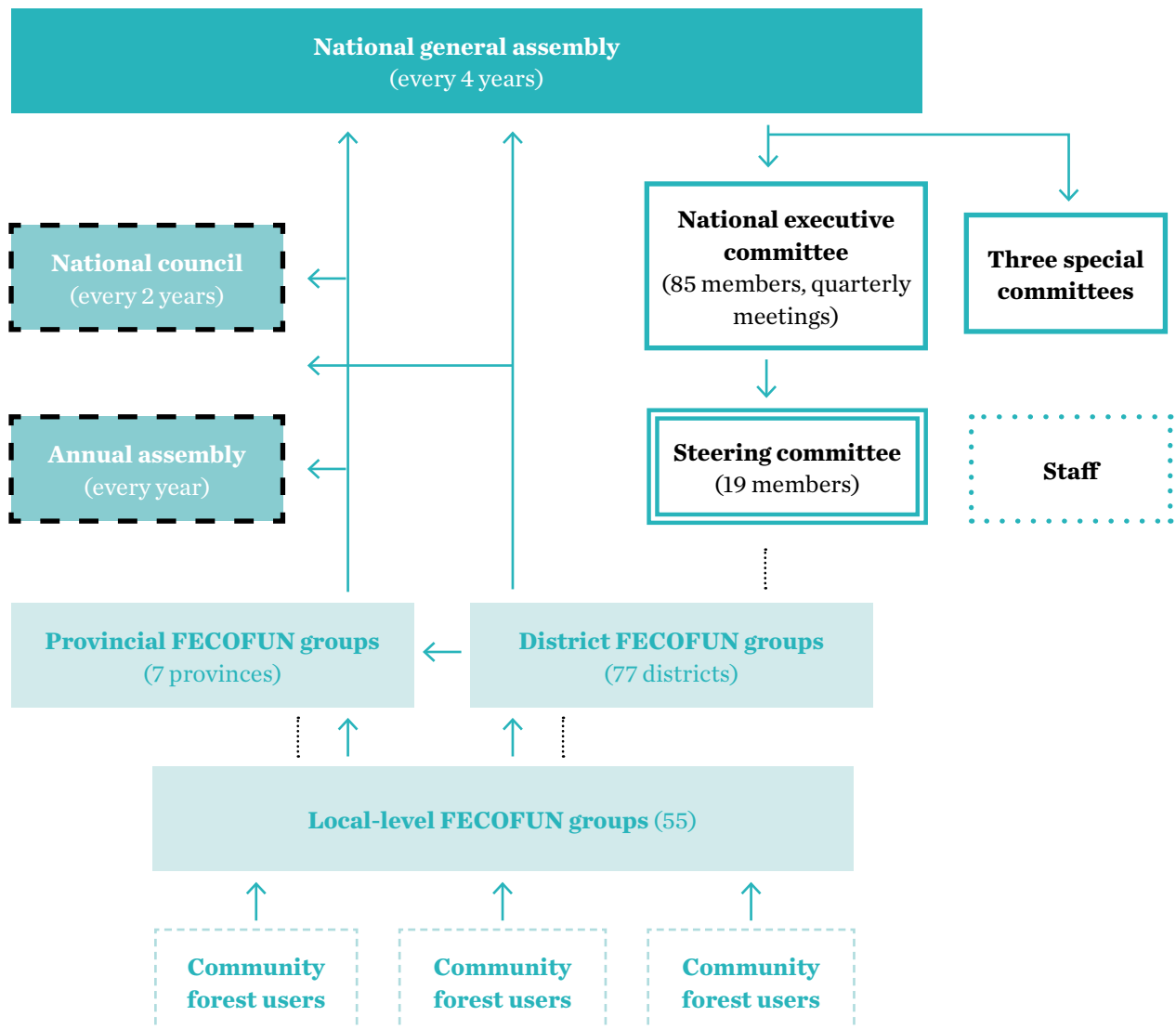
Internal governance can be defined as the structures, systems and practices within an organisation. These define who has the power to make decisions in pursuit of the organisation's goals (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Elements of internal governance



Structures refer to the “relations between the components of an organised whole”.⁴ Organisational structures are how the staff and different units or departments within an organisation are laid out and relate to one another. These can typically be displayed in an organogram, such as the example shown in Figure 2 of the Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN), below.

Figure 2. Example of organisational structure: an organogram of FECOFUN, Nepal



Systems involve sets of interacting or interrelated elements that are joined together to achieve common goals. In practice, organisational systems are multiple and are usually guided by some form of written policy (such as the constitution, membership system, leadership system or decision-making system).

Practices can be defined as the ways in which an organisation’s actions are normally performed. This could mean how an organisation applies its policies, theories, conceptual ideas, beliefs and/or methods to achieve its goals. An organisation’s practices might be thought of as its useful ‘tricks of the trade’.

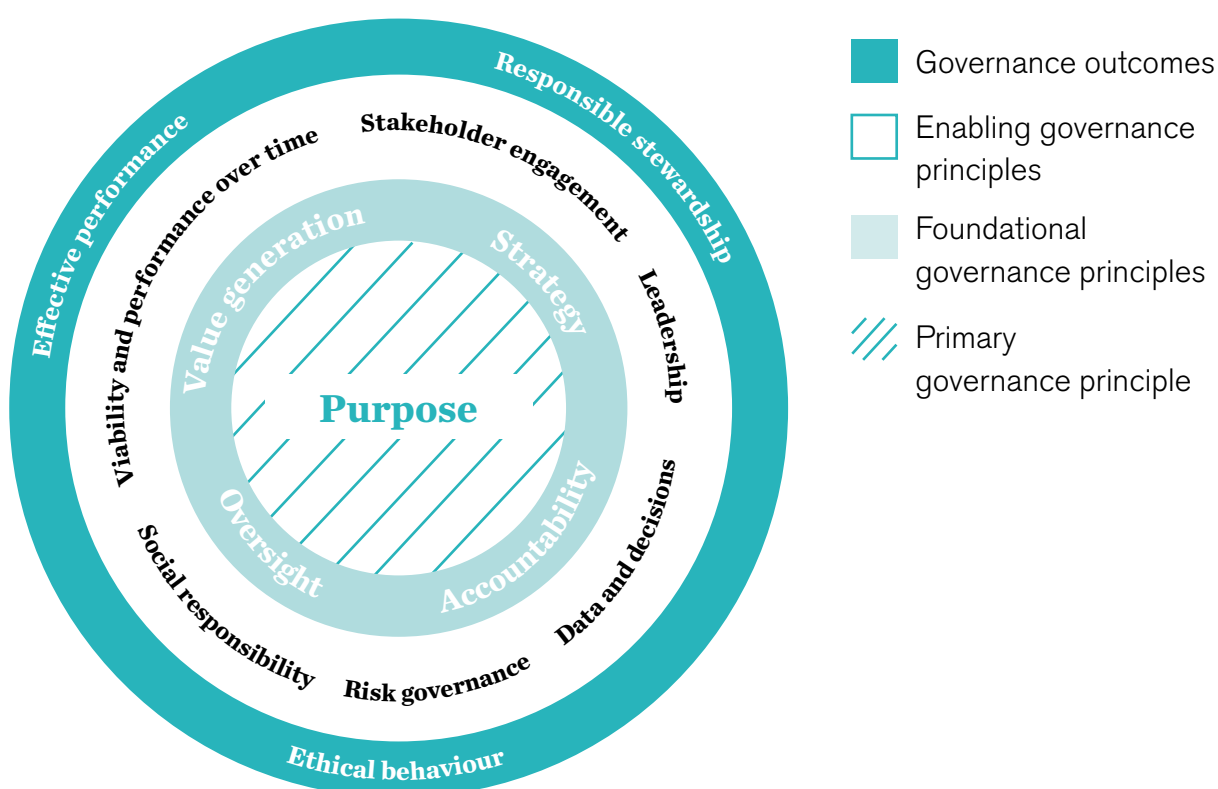
Why is internal governance important?

Because internal governance defines who gets to decide what in pursuit of organisational goals, it affects all relationships within an organisation. Trust between members, based on those relationships, is central to any sort of collective action. It follows that internal governance is critical to an organisation's success or failure. When trust breaks down, organisations break down.

Internal governance structures, systems and practices that define how people relate within an organisation are therefore make-or-break for that organisation. If ordered in an effective way, good internal governance can:

- **Build organisational trust** and enhance peer-to-peer respect, democratic accountability, reciprocity, benefit-sharing and legitimacy, while reducing structural inequalities. This in turn can help people feel they belong, enhance a sense of solidarity and commitment, and motivate members to give their best.
- **Strengthen organisational integrity** by maintaining internal and external consistency, thereby generating value for the organisation (for example the values of fairness, equity, transparency, accountability and following the rule of law). This in turn can enhance the efficiency with which an organisation solves problems.
- **Enhance organisational effectiveness** by maintaining a shared and evolving strategy. This involves listening and learning, careful oversight, and demonstrating responsiveness to new challenges. This can enhance how effectively an organisation achieves its goals, in turn creating a virtuous circle that attracts new members and strengthens organisational trust (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. How good internal governance helps to clarify and deliver organisational purpose



Why is the GET-SET toolkit needed?

Based on the FFF's experiences, the GET-SET toolkit has been developed to address several important challenges, constraints and gaps related to internal governance that are commonly faced by FFPOs.

- **Persistent governance gaps:** Many FFPOs lack robust governance structures, which impedes effective decision making and reduces overall organisational health. The FFF 2023 global survey² highlighted that internal governance remains a major knowledge gap across these organisations.²
- **Complex sector-specific challenges:** FFPOs often operate in unique environments where communal ownership, decentralised management and collective decision making can complicate governance processes. Tailored approaches can help them to navigate these complex, context-specific challenges.^{5,6,7,8,9,10}
- **Long-term organisational sustainability:** Effective internal governance is linked to better resource management and resilience, helping FFPOs sustain operations through market or environmental challenges. Without strong governance, organisations may struggle to survive long term in demanding forestry contexts.¹¹
- **Collective decision-making challenges:** FFPOs often rely on collective ownership and democratic decision making, which can be complex and slow without well-defined structures.^{5,12} The GET-SET toolkit can guide organisations towards establishing frameworks that support effective group decisions and equitable participation.
- **Resource and knowledge constraints:** Many FFPOs, particularly those in remote or under-resourced areas, have limited access to training resources on governance principles or advanced organisational management. Tailored resources like the GET-SET toolkit can support these organisations in building governance knowledge and systems that fit their specific contexts.¹²
- **High dependence on external partners:** FFPOs often partner with governments, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and private entities. Effective governance helps FFPOs to balance these relationships and maintain autonomy, fostering partnerships built on transparency and mutual trust.¹³
- **Member participation and empowerment:** Governance in many FFPOs requires balancing power dynamics, often involving diverse communities with varied socioeconomic backgrounds. The GET-SET toolkit offers a framework to encourage equitable member participation and empower all voices within the organisation, enhancing collective ownership and cohesion.¹⁴
- **Gender and power imbalances:** Gender roles and power imbalances within organisations can impede fair decision making and limit inclusivity.¹⁵ A governance toolkit can provide guidance on integrating gender equality and empowering marginalised members.
- **Accountability and transparency:** Weak governance can lead to accountability issues, misuse of resources and diminished stakeholder trust. A structured toolkit such as GET-SET can help FFPOs implement governance practices to ensure transparency and accountability, thereby fostering trust among members and partners.¹³

Who is the GET-SET toolkit for?

The toolkit is designed for use by FFPOs at any or all of three different levels:

- First-tier local-level FFPOs
- Second-tier regional groups, and
- Third-tier national or international federations.

The GET-SET toolkit provides a structured framework for FFPOs and other organisations already engaged in supporting FFPOs to think through governance issues. Each tier can use the toolkit to strengthen internal governance, improve support for their members, and foster sustainable growth and resilience across their FFPO network. Local-level FFPOs can use GET-SET independently to strengthen their internal governance, while regional and/or national-level FFPOs may also wish to use the tool across their wider FFPO federations, so that results and progress can be shared and monitored over time. It may also help to better align the development of internal governance throughout the organisation.

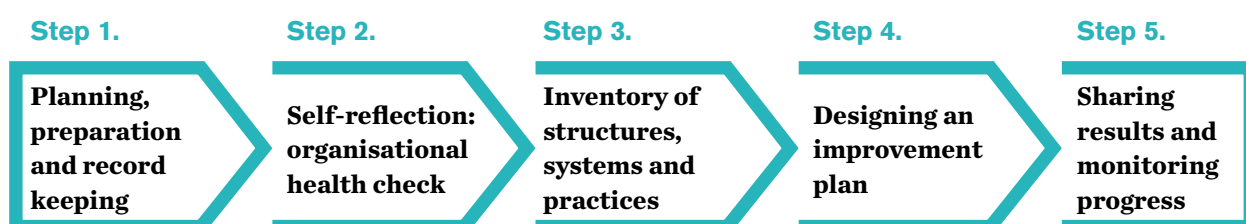
What does the GET-SET toolkit do?

The GET-SET toolkit is a self-assessment resource designed to help organisations evaluate and improve their internal governance practices. It is tailored to the unique challenges faced by FFPOs within forest and farm landscapes, and addresses distinct governance needs within these contexts. This will ultimately enhance organisational performance, accountability and resilience, thereby improving the sustainability and impact of the initiatives they support.

The GET-SET toolkit involves five core steps:

- **Step 1:** Establish who will be involved and who will be responsible for keeping records of the process (preparatory phase).
- **Step 2:** Conduct a self-reflective organisational ‘health check’ to determine how well the organisation is functioning and the relationships within it.
- **Step 3:** Create an inventory of what useful structures, systems and practices the organisation might or might not have in place to better order those relationships.
- **Step 4:** Design an internal governance improvement plan, with the aim of identifying and strengthening any areas of weakness.
- **Step 5:** Share the results with the rest of the FFPO membership, especially if there are changes to internal governance systems, practices and structures that might need approval or ratification. The results can also act as a benchmark against which to monitor and evaluate progress, for example on an annual basis.

Figure 4. Using the GET-SET self-evaluation tool: the five main steps



Step 1.

Planning, preparation and record keeping

The process should be initiated by your organisation's management or leadership teams: as elected officials, they represent your organisation's broader membership. Once your organisation has agreed to use the GET-SET approach, agree a place and time where key members of your organisation can get together to go through the process of self-evaluating their internal governance processes. The self-assessment process should take between half and one full day to complete.

Ideally, the group who conducts this self-assessment should consist of those involved in the day-to-day running of your organisation, and drawn from all areas, not just the management group. It is vital that operational staff are invited and feel free to express honestly any concerns they may have about the organisation. The management should ensure that the self-assessment team is composed of both management and some form of representation from the FFPOs, including the various interest groups. Women, youth, representatives from different user rights/products groups and other potentially marginalised factions should also be specifically invited to attend.

At the start of the meeting, there should be an introductory talk that sets the ground rules about the constructive nature of the approach, emphasising that the self-assessment does not seek to blame individuals for any failings but to find organisational solutions. During each stage of the self-assessment process, take care to allow each member to speak — or write — their concerns, so that the meeting is not dominated by powerful individuals.

A trusted individual should be appointed to take detailed notes of the key observations made by all participants during the self-assessment process. In order to share the results afterwards, it is important to record information about the organisation itself (see Table 1).

Table 1. Organisational information to be recorded for self-assessments

Organisation name	
Organisation address	
Year of registration	
Goal/vision	
Geographical area of operations	
Working sectors (for example, agriculture, forestry, fisheries)	
Main services/activities	
Number of members (women and men)	
Number of staff (women and men)	
Number of board members (women and men)	

Step 2.

Self-reflection: an organisational health check

The next step in the self-assessment process is self-reflection on what is — or is not — working well, and the relationships within the organisation and between it and other entities. The usefulness of the GET-SET self-assessment process can be greatly enhanced if there is a common understanding within the organisation about what is working well and what is not. Internal governance is primarily about arranging the relationships within an organisation towards effective pursuit of its goals.

Step 2 should take an hour or more. The aim is to discuss collectively what the organisation has achieved in the past year, how people feel about internal relationships and harmony within the organisation, how external relationships feel, and the overall spirit of morale within the organisation, before wrapping up with some initial thinking about any changes needed to improve things for the next year.

For this exercise, it is worth providing a flipchart or some other board on which notes can be taken. A facilitator should run the meeting and be tasked with ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to voice their opinion. Someone also needs to act as an impartial notetaker for the discussion, and check at the end that everyone is happy with the way the notes have been taken.

Ideas for discussion

- **Accomplishments of the past year:** What were our aims? What was done well? How do you explain our success?
- **Internal relationships and harmony:** How clear are roles and responsibilities within our organisation? Are members participating, including women and youth? Are any jobs not being done? Are members happy with the information they are provided with? Are we attracting new members? Have there been any conflicts and how were they handled?
- **Our organisation's relationships with others:** How good are our relationships with our members and non-members in our village or neighbouring villages, with other enterprises, state enterprises, other government agencies, NGOs and others? How can we work with them to improve relations?
- **Our organisation's morale:** Has confidence improved? Or how might it?
- **Priorities for the next year:** How can we correct our organisational weaknesses? How can we improve benefits for our members and improve management of agroforestry or community forestry? How can we strengthen our business and consider ideas for new products? How can we pursue new training and other capacity-building needs? What new aims might we have for next year? What might we need to change in our structures, systems, policies and practices to achieve those aims? Who needs to do what?

Step 3.

Inventory of internal governance capacity areas

Following the self-reflection process outlined in Step 2, the group might already have some ideas about what changes they think might be needed. The next step is to self-assess your organisation's existing internal governance capacity areas — its structures, systems and policies, and practices — to identify which can be improved to help achieve your organisation's goals.

Step 3 involves conducting a thorough and systematic inventory of your organisation's structures, systems, policies and practices. To help break up the discussions, we have divided the inventory into three blocks. The blocks are then subdivided into categories, which are outlined in Table 2. The blocks and the categories within each are based on IIED's research into the governance structures, systems, policies and practices found in FFPOs widely regarded to be well managed.

Each category corresponds to a table containing a list of key elements within that category. We recommend that a facilitator guides discussions with the group through each of the tables, allowing people to confirm whether or not the elements listed are either not present, under development or fully in place within their organisation. Ideas for how each element might be improved should also be recorded.

As the facilitator moves through each block and category, the participants should allocate each element a score from 0 to 2:

- Not present (0)
- Under development (1)
- Fully in place (2)

At the end of Step 3, the scores are then added up to provide a snapshot of how well the organisation is doing. The scores will then feed into Step 4 and are intended to help FFPOs identify which areas of internal governance that they need to improve, so that they can prioritise action for the year ahead (usually two to three priority areas).

Table 2. Inventory of internal governance capacity: blocks and categories

Block	Table	Categories
3.1 Structures	3.1.1	Legal foundations, oversight, vision and participation
	3.1.2	Membership structure and inclusion
	3.1.3	Operational departments and support services
	3.1.4	Financial structures and integrity
	3.1.5	Compliance structures and accountability
3.2 Systems and policies	3.2.1	Guiding documents or policies
	3.2.2	Constitutional and strategic processes
	3.2.3	Leadership and decision-making processes
	3.2.4	Operational and financial-management systems
	3.2.5	Sustainability and risk-management policies
	3.2.6	Accountability and communication systems
3.3 Practices	3.3.1	Sustainability and resilience-building practices
	3.3.2	Leadership and capacity-building practices
	3.3.3	Operational and financial integrity practices
	3.3.4	Inclusive governance and membership practices
	3.3.5	Advocacy and engagement practices

Structures

Table 3.1.1 Legal foundations, oversight, vision and participation

Structural elements	(0) Not present	(1) Under development	(2) Fully operational
1. Formally registered as some form of group organisation and is committed to legal standards			
2. Board is comprised of members drawn from broad spectrum of expertise relevant to the operations of the organisation			
3. Management team has considerable expertise in areas of leadership, finance, records, operations and human resources			
4. Founding documents including a written constitution and written mission, and vision, values and goals that reflect its members' aspirations			
5. The organisation has used a member-driven consultative process to formulate its founding documents			
Suggestions for improvement			

Table 3.1.2 Membership structure and inclusion

Structural elements	(0) Not present	(1) Under development	(2) Fully operational
6. Inclusive general assembly to which the board of directors and management report			
7. Tiered democratic decision-making structures that may be layered into local, regional and federation/national levels			
8. Gender balance/quotas on tiered leadership committees in representative structures up to and including the board			
9. Women's groups that are additional to any other regular group meetings			
Suggestions for improvement			

Table 3.1.3 Operational departments and support services

Structural elements	(0) Not present	(1) Under development	(2) Fully operational
10. Written organogram with core departments (for example management, human resources, operations and finance)			
11. Specialised units (for example research, certification, logistics, communication, monitoring and learning, advocacy)			
12. Divisions for member services (for example membership recruitment, operational and technical services, extension support)			
13. Office where organisational records are kept (for example founding documents, decisions, finances, stock, repairs)			
Suggestions for improvement			

Table 3.1.4 Financial structures and integrity

Structural elements	(0) Not present	(1) Under development	(2) Fully operational
14. Transparent and digitised financial accounting system that is banked and audited publicly			
15. Savings and credit cooperative organisation (SACCO) that provides savings and loans facilities for members (digitised)			
16. Links to external financial service providers for loans/investment support			
17. Trading arm that negotiates and to buyers sells as a group to ensure best prices for farmers, products			
Suggestions for improvement			

Table 3.1.5 Compliance structures and accountability

Structural elements	(0) Not present	(1) Under development	(2) Fully operational
18. Structured relationships with government authorities from different sectors			
19. Structured relationships and partnerships with other development agencies, buyers etc			
Suggestions for improvement			

Mean value for Section 3.1

Systems and policies

Table 3.2.1 Guiding documents or policies

Systems and policies		(0) Not present	(1) Under development	(2) Fully operational
20.	Has a constitution, bylaws or other documented internal regulations and membership rules			
21.	Has a written vision, goal or mission statement that is regularly reviewed and revised			
22.	Has a written strategic/business plan that is updated each year			
23.	Has a written finance policy, manual and/or guidelines that are followed			
24.	Has a written human resources policy, manual and/or guidelines			
25.	Has a written anti-corruption policy that is actively enforced			
26.	Has a written gender policy and/or strategy that is visibly enacted			
27.	Has a written advocacy agenda targeting specific decision makers			

Suggestions for improvement

Table 3.2.2 Constitutional and strategic processes

Systems and policies	(0) Not present	(1) Under development	(2) Fully operational
28. Process of structured consultation and feedback on the constitution, bylaws or other internal regulations by all members			
29. Clear cycle of strategic or business planning with regular progress meetings			
30. Actively maintained policy on membership rights, withdrawal, responsibilities (inspections), and fees to ensure loyalty			
31. Regular cycle of meetings, including general assemblies and extraordinary assemblies, and management meetings			
32. Participatory approach used to develop policies, norms and to set standards for adaptability			
Suggestions for improvement			

Table 3.2.3 Leadership and decision-making processes

Systems and policies	(0) Not present	(1) Under development	(2) Fully operational
33. Leadership nomination, vetting, election, terms and service periods defined			
34. Written procedures for decision making at different levels to avoid conflicts			
35. Structured process for encouraging women's membership, leadership and participation in decision making			
36. Youth policy to encourage participation and involvement of youth in leadership			
37. Deliberate policy for the social inclusion of ethnic minorities or other vulnerable groups			
38. Leadership accountability and transparency maintained through regular and transparent reporting (including finances)			
Suggestions for improvement			

Table 3.2.4 Operational and financial management systems

Systems and policies		(0) Not present	(1) Under development	(2) Fully operational
39.	Financial procedures, management and accounting policies are in place, including audits			
40.	Published reports of activities and finances for transparency and accountability			
41.	Commitment to resource mobilisation beyond membership fees including through the sale of products and services			
42.	Human resource policy with guidance on recruitment, conditions and wellbeing			
43.	Clear job and consultancy terms of reference for non-staff employment for clarity and trust			
44.	Operational services for training, certification, inputs and administrative support			
45.	Production quality and certification standards with internal monitoring procedures			

Suggestions for improvement

Table 3.2.5 Sustainability and risk-management policies

Systems and policies		(0) Not present	(1) Under development	(2) Fully operational
46.	Land-use planning, sustainability standards, rules and inspections are in place			
47.	Ecological schools/training courses have been set up to promote long-term sustainability and climate resilience of producers			
48.	Climate-resilience plans have been developed to assess vulnerabilities and guide member actions			
49.	Risk-management plan in place to mitigate potential challenges with a regular cycle of risk self-assessment			
50.	Monitoring and evaluation plan or regular project evaluations are in place to assess effectiveness of activities			
Suggestions for improvement				

Table 3.2.6 Accountability and communication systems

Systems and policies		(0) Not present	(1) Under development	(2) Fully operational
51.	Safeguarding and grievance mechanism procedures are in place, understood and enforced			
52.	Procedures in place preventing members from leaving and competing against the organisation			
53.	Clear communication plan in place to keep members and stakeholders informed			
54.	Procedures for extraordinary assemblies in place as required by membership vote			
Suggestions for improvement				

Mean value for Section 3.2

Practices

Table 3.3.1 Sustainability and resilience-building practices

Common practices	(0) Not present	(1) Under development	(2) Fully operational
55. Has strong, mutually agreed sustainability goals with regular progress assessments			
56. Promotes agroforestry and agroecology diversification beyond cash crops for resilience			
57. Emphasises agroforestry and sustainable forestry as a business, not a last resort			
58. Encourages on-farm tree planting for shade and supporting tree nurseries			
59. Has developed shared or third-party labels to make claims on sustainability, equity or origin accessible for members			
60. Financial support in place for member-based groups to improve their internal finance and accounting			

Suggestions for improvement

Table 3.3.2 Leadership and capacity-building practices

Common practices	(0) Not present	(1) Under development	(2) Fully operational
61. Proactive leadership that listens to members, identifies and pre-empts potential problems			
62. Developing a leadership continuity strategy and staff training to reduce dependence on consultants			
63. Clear training and capacity-development opportunities in place (not just training) for members and staff			
64. Coaching for community-level facilitators in place (not just training), to ensure longer-term uptake			

Suggestions for improvement

Table 3.3.3 Operational and financial integrity practices

Common practices	(0) Not present	(1) Under development	(2) Fully operational
65. Digital weighing of crops (for example cocoa) when buying from members for transparency			
66. Financial compliance systems in place, including a chartered accountant managing the digital finance system			
67. Regular field visits to monitor and check on members' progress and financial situation			
68. Strong attention to communication about choices and decisions at all levels			
69. Strict processes for assessing and reducing staff costs for efficiency purposes			
Suggestions for improvement			

Table 3.3.4 Inclusive governance and membership practices

Common practices	(0) Not present	(1) Under development	(2) Fully operational
70. Non-discrimination with an emphasis on women and youth equality			
71. Regular meetings between executive committees and employees to improve outcomes			
72. Prioritisation of consensus-based decision making with voting as a last resort			
73. Regular reflection workshops and social gatherings in place to reassess objectives and progress			
74. Funds for local social projects in place (for example roads, cultural houses, COVID support)			
Suggestions for improvement			

Table 3.3.5 Advocacy and engagement practices

Common practices		(0) Not present	(1) Under development	(2) Fully operational
75.	Strong advocacy for enabling policies for sustainable production of different crops, trees and livestock			
76.	Emphasis on protecting farmers’ rights, tenure and tree registration in dialogue with authorities			
77.	Strong media engagement and peer-to-peer learning dialogues between members			
78.	Acting as a liaison between multiple government agencies affecting forest communities			
79.	Use of social media (for example, Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber) to build community and share key messages			
80.	Co-operation with other organisations sharing common agendas to pursue mutual goals			
Suggestions for improvement				

Mean value for Section 3.3

Results

The results from the GET-SET self-assessment are systematically tabulated and analysed to provide a clear snapshot of an FFPO's internal governance capacity (see Table 3.4.1). Scores highlight strengths and pinpoint areas for improvement, guiding the creation of the targeted development plans in Step 4. This analysis helps prioritise key areas for development, to enhance governance structures, systems and practices.

Table 3.4.1 Inventory of internal governance capacity areas: results

Block	Score	Score %
Structures		
Systems and policies		
Practices		

Step 4.

Designing an improvement plan

The final step is to hold a group planning meeting. The aim is to design an internal governance improvement plan for your organisation, outlining its priorities for the year ahead. This can take place immediately after Steps 2 and 3. Ideally, the people involved in the self-reflection process should also be involved in Step 4, so that they can bring with them the lessons learnt from the previous steps.

In Step 4, FFPOs should prioritise the top three most pressing needs/weaknesses that need to be addressed over the coming year. The number of priorities should depend on the resources your organisation has available to address them. The process should not take too long — between half a day and one full day, maximum — and a neutral facilitator should be appointed to guide the discussions and ensure inclusivity.

Preparing for the planning meeting

Before the planning meeting, preliminary input can be gathered from members through focus group discussions (FGDs), identifying strengths and challenges in your organisation's current governance framework. In addition, relevant data such as performance reports and feedback from the past year should be reviewed and shared with the meeting participants beforehand to ensure everyone comes prepared.

The FGDs to discuss the self-improvement plan should involve the same people who participated in the self-reflection and prioritisation stages. It makes sense for them to be involved in finding solutions and developing the improvement plan. If needed, additional FFPO members can be involved to ensure inclusivity and diversity of perspectives, but you will need to ensure that those members are brought up to speed on what has already taken place and the rationale behind prioritising certain areas for improvement.

Planning meeting: defining priorities and agreeing action plans

The group should then convene a planning meeting that should include three key sessions:

- **Review:** The first step is for participants to be divided into three groups — one each for structures, systems and policies, and practices — to assess the current state of play within your organisation. The groups should not be too large (a maximum of 15–20 people in each). Based on the results of the previous steps, each group should identify successes and key challenges in their assigned area (see Tables 4.2.1, 4.2.2 and 4.2.3). Depending on the number of people involved in Step 4, you might consider splitting them into more than three groups to enable constructive deliberations and ease of group management.
- **Define priorities:** After this, hold a plenary session to share the groups' findings and to facilitate an open discussion to agree on one to three key priorities for each capacity area or 'block' (structures, systems and policies, and practices). These should align with the organisation's overarching goals and member needs.
- **Action planning:** Participants should then break into groups to develop practical steps to achieve each identified priority. This includes setting timelines, assigning responsibilities and outlining the resources required for implementation.

Table 4.2.1 Changes to organisational structures

Main structural strengths	
Main structural weaknesses	
Priorities for the year ahead	
• What are the implications of the results?	
• What will be done to address them?	
• Who will be responsible for the next steps?	
• When will the next steps be taken?	

Table 4.2.2 Changes to systems and policies

Main systems and policy strengths

Main systems and policy weaknesses

Priorities for the year ahead

- What are the implications of the results?
 - What will be done to address them?
 - Who will be responsible for the next steps?
 - When will the next steps be taken?
-

Table 4.2.3 Changes to practices linked to structures, systems and policies

Main practice strengths

Main practice weaknesses

Priorities for the year ahead

- What are the implications of the results?
 - What will be done to address them?
 - Who will be responsible for the next steps?
 - When will the next steps be taken?
-

Step 5.

Implementing and monitoring action plans

Good follow up ensures accountability. The facilitator should consolidate the outcomes of the meeting into a draft priority plan, which should be shared with all members for final feedback and approval at the next general assembly. Clear roles should be assigned for monitoring progress, and periodic reviews should be scheduled to track and adjust actions as needed throughout the year.

Sharing the results of Steps 2 and 3 and the priority plans developed in Step 4 across the FFPO leadership and the broader membership of your organisation fosters transparency and collective learning. This will enable collaborative efforts to strengthen internal governance. As your organisation develops over time, it will be useful to revisit this tool and rescore the sections to see what progress has been made. By keeping the original baseline, your organisation can see how it is progressing year on year.

Final thoughts

Using the GET-SET self-assessment tool is intended to be a voluntary process rather than one that is externally driven and mandatory. It can be used by any FFPO, irrespective of whether it is a first, second or third-tier organisation, to improve its internal governance. However, second or third-tier FFPO management boards might decide that it would be of use for their wider affiliate members to also undertake the self-assessment process, so that each tier of the wider organisation is better aligned, moving forward.

Endnotes

- 1 FFF provides financial support and technical assistance to forest and farm producer organisations, aiming to empower smallholder farmers, Indigenous communities, rural women's groups and others to manage their land sustainably and improve their livelihoods while protecting forests.
- 2 Forest and Farm Facility (2023) Knowledge and demand surveys: results of 41 FFPOs from 6 countries. Unpublished report.
- 3 GET-SET is an update of a previous tool developed by FFF, the Organizational Capacity Self-Assessment Tool for Producer Organizations (OCSAT).
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June 2025

Governance

Forest governance, Forest and Farm Facility (FFF), producer organisations

Effective internal governance is crucial for organisational success, yet many organisations still struggle with implementing strong governance practices. A recent global survey conducted by the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) across six countries (Ecuador, Ghana, Kenya, Nepal, Vietnam and Zambia) identified internal governance as a key knowledge gap among 41 forest and farm producer organisations (FFPOs). The Governance Enhancement Tactics — Self-Evaluation Tool (GET-SET), presented in this publication, aims to stimulate structured reflection by managers and staff of FFPOs on how to improve their current internal governance structures, systems and practices, based on insights from leading FFPOs and other internal governance experts. Using the GET-SET tool, FFPOs will move from identifying their internal governance challenges towards finding solutions.



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