

Helping ourselves

Tactics for improving internal governance
of forest and farm producer organisations

Stephen Mwangi



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Abbreviations

AGM	Annual general meeting
AOPEB	Association of Organizations of Ecological Producers of Bolivia (Asociación de Organizaciones de Productores Ecológicos de Bolivia)
BMAC	Binh Minh Agroforestry Cooperative
CFUGs	Community forestry user groups
CTOP	Togolese Coordination of Farmers' Organisations and Agricultural Producers (Coordination Togolaise des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs Agricoles)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal
FFF	Forest and Farm Facility
FFPOs	Forest and farm producer organisations
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GET-SET	Governance Enhancement Tactics — Self Evaluation Tool
HR	Human resources
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
MJUMITA	Tanzania Community Forest Network (Mtandao wa Jamii wa Usimamizi wa Mimitu Tanzania)
SACCO	Savings and credit cooperative organisation

Summary

Strong internal governance is essential for the success and sustainability of **forest and farm producer organisations (FFPOs)**. Internal governance can be defined as the structures, systems and practices within an organisation. Internal governance determines how decisions are made, how resources are managed and how members engage with their organisation. FFPOs play a vital role in delivering climate-resilient livelihoods, sustainable natural resource management, and inclusive development in forest and farm landscapes. Yet without strong internal governance, FFPOs risk losing member trust, facing operational inefficiencies and failing to achieve their goals. For FFPOs — often operating in complex, multi-tiered environments — effective governance is not only a matter of operational efficiency but also a foundation for building **trust**, ensuring **integrity** and achieving **purpose**.

This report explores what good internal governance looks like in practice and how it can be strengthened. It draws on a review of relevant literature and six in-depth case studies of well-governed FFPOs from Bolivia, Ghana, Nepal, Tanzania, Togo and Viet Nam. These case studies span different organisational tiers — local, intermediary and national — and offer rich insights into how FFPOs structure themselves, manage internal systems and embed good practices. The report is organised into nine chapters:

- Chapter 1 defines internal governance and introduces its three foundational pillars: **structures** (how roles and responsibilities are arranged), **systems and policies** (the rules and procedures that guide operations), and **practices** (the day-to-day behaviours that reflect organisational values). It also outlines three core principles of good governance: **trust, integrity and purpose**.
- Chapters 2 to 4 explore how internal governance contributes to these principles. Chapter 2 focuses on building organisational trust through inclusive structures and participatory systems. Chapter 3 examines how governance fosters integrity by promoting transparency, accountability and ethical behaviour. Chapter 4 highlights how governance enables FFPOs to achieve their purpose through strategic alignment, member engagement and effective delivery of services.
- Chapter 5 explains why internal governance is particularly important for FFPOs, given their role in sharing smallholder experiences, improving market access and using collective voice to advocate for policy change. It also outlines the risks of governance breakdown and the consequences for organisational performance and member livelihoods.
- Chapter 6 presents six case studies of FFPOs that have demonstrated strong internal governance. These include the Association of Organizations of Ecological Producers of Bolivia (Asociación de Organizaciones de Productores Ecológicos de Bolivia, or AOPEB); Kokoo Pa Farmers Association, Ghana; Binh Minh Agroforestry Cooperative (BMAC), Viet Nam; the Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN), Nepal; Mtandao wa Jamii wa Usimamizi wa Misitu Tanzania (MJUMITA), Tanzania; and Togolese Coordination of Farmers' Organisations and Agricultural Producers (Coordination Togolaise des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs Agricoles), Togo. Each case illustrates how governance structures, systems and practices are applied in context.
- Chapter 7 synthesises findings from the case studies into a set of **81 common governance elements**, categorised under the three pillars. These elements are presented in structured tables and form the basis for a practical self-assessment tool (see Appendix 2).
- Chapter 8 distils key lessons from the case studies, offering ten top tips under each governance pillar. These lessons are relevant to FFPOs at all levels and provide actionable guidance for strengthening internal governance.
- Chapter 9 introduces the **Governance Enhancement Tactics — Self-Evaluation Tool (GET-SET)**. This toolkit enables FFPOs to reflect on their governance, assess strengths and gaps, and develop improvement plans. It emphasises inclusive participation, regular review and continuous learning.

The **GET-SET** tool detailed in Appendix 2 offers FFPOs a practical framework for self-assessment and improvement. It encourages regular reflection, inclusive participation and strategic planning to enhance governance quality. By applying GET-SET, FFPOs can build member trust, improve operational integrity and more effectively achieve their organisational purpose.

1

About internal governance

1.1 What do we mean by internal governance?

Cooperation is perhaps humanity's main competitive advantage over other animal species. Cooperation within different types of society and organisation has so enabled humans to shape Earth's environment with amazing feats of engineering that some have called this age the Anthropocene: a new human-dominated geological epoch (Lewis and Maslin, 2015).

For cooperation to work, decisions must be taken that determine who does what — a process referred to as governance. Getting those decision-making processes right so that the cooperation achieves its desired ends could be called good governance. And good governance plays a crucial role in determining societal wellbeing (Graham et al., 2003; Serikbayeva and Abdulla, 2022). This is both true generally and in specific contexts such as forest and farm landscapes (Mayers and Bass, 1999).

The problem is that current societies and organisations in forest and farm landscapes are not acting equitably or sustainably. There are several factors that contribute to this, and poor governance is one of them. And the result is seen in deforestation and degradation that contribute to crises that span climate, nature and people. For example, agricultural expansion (both commercial and subsistence) account for approximately 70% of global deforestation (FAO and UNEP, 2020).

So, governance is vital to our planetary future. But what is meant by the terms 'governance' and 'internal governance'? Graham et al. (2003) cautions us that definitions of governance can be challenging, subtle, complex and powerful. Botchway (2001) and Kjaer (2023) go as far as to say that a universal definition of governance has not yet been achieved. Yet, for the purposes of this report, definitions of the two terms (governance and internal governance) are provided below:

- **Governance** refers to the processes whereby societies or organisations make their important decisions, determine whom they involve in the process, and how they hold them to account (Graham et al., 2003). Put more simply, governance refers to who decides what.
- **Internal governance** refers to the structures, systems and practices **within an organisation** that are designed to ensure effective decision making in pursuit of its goals. In other words, internal governance is about who decides what in an organisation (rather than in society as a whole).

Internal governance is central to organisations of all types. Another researcher defined internal governance as the “processes, customs, policies, laws and institutes that direct the organisations and corporations in the way they act, administer, and control their operations” (Khan 2011). Chapter 5 looks at just how important forest and farm producer organisations (FFPOs) are to what happens in forest landscapes — and why their internal governance matters.

Chapters 1 to 4 begin to unpack what internal governance of FFPOs involves — since it encompasses the structures, systems and practices put in place by those organisations (Khan, 2011; Bijman, 2016; European Banking Authority, 2021) to define their mission statements, goals and objectives, to set out their membership rules and responsibilities, to order their leadership and structure their operational units, to guide their operations through procedures or codes of conduct or controls, to install oversight mechanisms that align activities with their goals and values, and to mitigate their risks (Khan, 2011; Bijman, 2021; European Banking Authority, 2021).

1.2 Internal governance building blocks: structures, systems and practices

Internal governance includes all the structures, systems and practices through which an organisation sets its objectives and strategies, manages its risks and organises its business. It defines how responsibilities and authority are defined and enforced, how reporting lines are set up and what information they convey, and how the internal control framework is organised and implemented, including accounting procedures and enumeration policies. Internal governance also encompasses sound information technology systems, outsourcing arrangements and business continuity management (European Banking Authority, 2021).

Structures refer to “relations between the components of an organised whole” (Ahmady et al., 2016). Simply put, structures refer to how the staff, departments and processes that determine how an organisation operates are laid out. In this study, it also refers to how the membership of an organisation is constructed, including how groups of members are organised into different departments or tiers of organisation. Members provide the legitimisation of an organisation and the need to have influence. Organisational structures refer to the arrangement of roles, responsibilities and relationships within an organisation. They define the hierarchy, reporting lines and the way information flows.

An organisational structure can take various forms, such as functional, divisional, matrix or flat structures. In a functional structure, departments are divided based on specific functions, such as marketing or finance. A divisional structure organises departments based on products, regions or markets. Matrix structures combine functional and divisional forms, allowing for more flexible and cross-departmental communication. A flat structure minimises hierarchy and encourages a more egalitarian approach with fewer management layers. Structure should ideally follow function: it begins with identifying member functional needs, then designing processes to meet those needs, and finally shaping the structure to support those processes and functional needs. The practical implementation of organisational structure impacts how decisions are made, how communication flows, and the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation's operations (Ahmada and Fakhr, 2022; Bijman, 2021; European Banking Authority, 2021).

Systems can be defined as “sets of policies, principles or procedures according to which something is done; an organised scheme or method”. Systems involve sets of interacting or interrelated elements that are joined together to achieve common goals. This study will look at various organisational systems necessary for enhancing good internal governance. These systems are designed to facilitate and streamline tasks, enhance efficiency and ensure consistency.

In practice, organisational systems are multiple. They include constitutional systems (such as vision, mission and bylaws), membership systems (such as rules, responsibilities and procedures for membership), leadership systems, decision-making processes, land-use planning processes and so on. They also include financial systems for budgeting and accounting, human resources (HR) systems for employee management, customer relationship management systems for tracking and serving customers, and supply chain management systems for overseeing the flow of goods and materials. Information technology plays a crucial role in supporting these systems, with software and hardware infrastructure enabling data collection and analysis that can feed back into refining policies and procedures. The practical implementation of organisational systems is essential for achieving operational effectiveness, ensuring data accuracy, and enabling an organisation to adapt to changing needs and challenges.

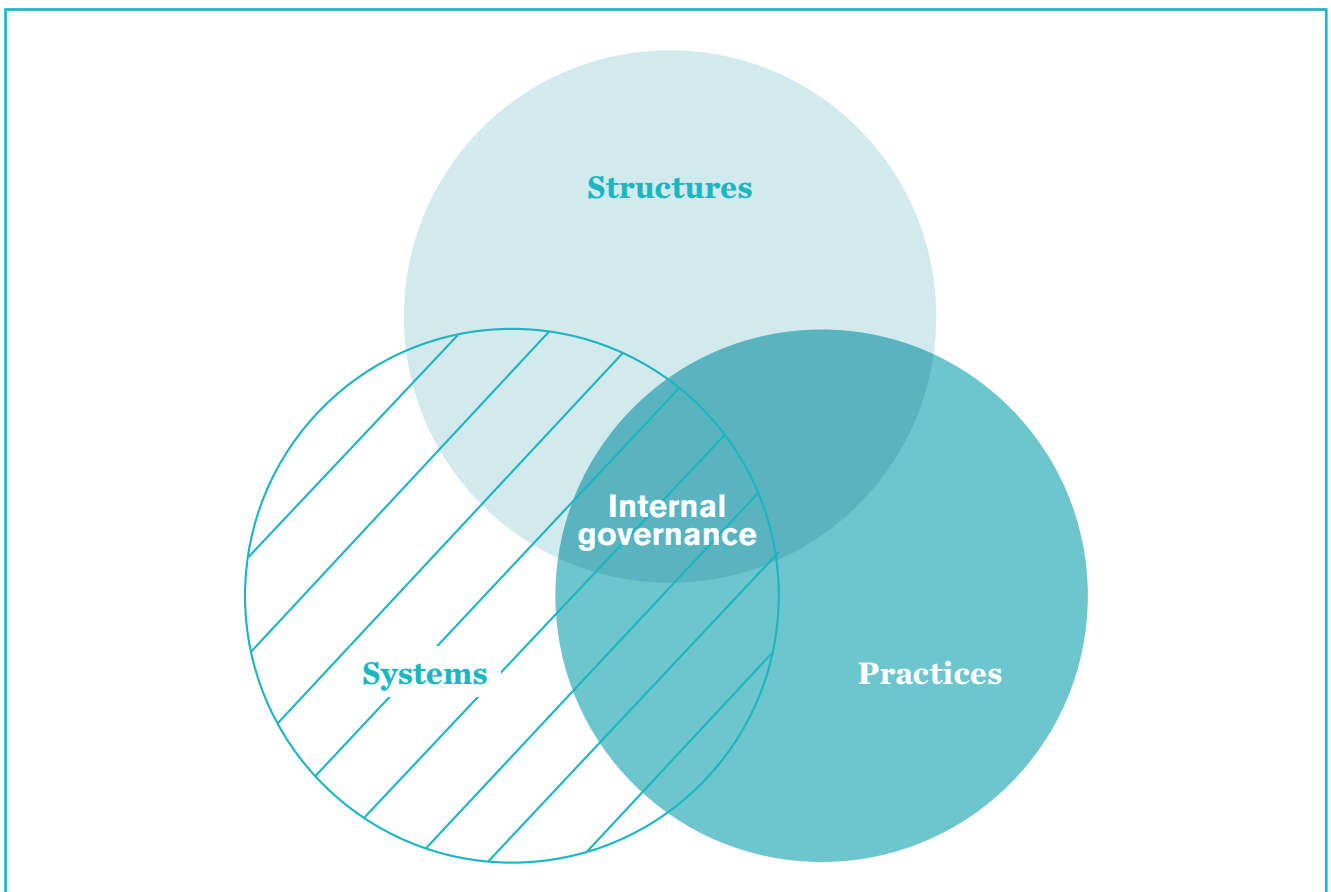
Practices can be defined as “how actions transpire in reality — rather than through policies or conceptual ideas”. Practices refer to the ways of applying a policy, idea, belief or method as opposed to theories relating to it. In this study, practices mean those ‘ways of working’ that an organisation has installed to enhance its internal governance: the actual behaviours, routines and procedures followed within an organisation. These practices embody the organisational culture and are guided by its goals, values and policies. In practice, they can include the ways of ensuring diversity in member

onboarding, ways of distributing profits, ways of coaching new staff, means of safeguarding employees, environmental practices, the way meetings are conducted, how performance evaluations are carried out, the communication channels utilised, and the methods for problem solving and decision making. Moreover, organisational practices include the organisation's approach to innovation, training programmes and the enforcement of ethical standards. These practices not only influence day-to-day operations but also shape the long-term success and reputation of the organisation. The practical implementation of organisational practices influences employee behaviour, productivity and the overall culture of the workplace, ultimately contributing to the organisation's success and its ability to achieve its objectives.

Figure 1 illustrates how structures, systems and practices interact within the internal governance of FFPOs. Each cycle represents a foundational element:

- Structures define how roles, responsibilities and relationships are arranged. They shape the hierarchy, reporting lines and membership tiers, determining how people and processes connect to support internal governance.
- Systems are the policies, tools and procedures that guide how tasks are carried out. They coordinate activities, uphold consistency and enable the organisation to meet goals through financial, leadership and planning mechanisms.
- Practices are the real-world routines and behaviours embedded in the culture of FFPOs. They reflect how policies are enacted — shaping diversity efforts, decision making, employee engagement and ethical standards in daily operations.

Figure 1. The three key elements of internal governance



In relation to internal governance, Bijman (2016, p.18) places particular emphasis on the decision-making elements of the structures, systems and practices within an organisation. Key characteristics of internal governance are the allocation of rights and obligations over the governing bodies, the monitoring and control of decision makers, the selection and election of the members of the board of directors, the distribution of rights between board and general assembly, and the distribution of voting rights.

Internal governance varies hugely between different organisational ownership models. For example, there are likely to be major differences in structure, systems and practices between the five main types of business organisation (see Macqueen, 2006):

- Limited companies (owned privately as companies limited by guarantee ('Ltd' or 'Pty') or publicly as companies limited by share such as corporations ('Corp' or 'Plc')
- Philanthropic organisations (owned — in trust from the benefactors — by people dedicated towards some charitable aim either as trusts or foundations)
- Public-sector enterprises (owned by government bodies that specify what public purpose they will pursue)
- Family businesses (owned by kinship groups), and
- Member-controlled enterprises (owned by their users, such as trusts, associations, partnerships, cooperatives or companies).

Member-controlled enterprises are the normal form that FFPOs adopt. These tend to have complex internal governance structures in part because of the democratic nature of such groups. There is often a delicate balance in the allocation of decision-making rights and income rights. This balance may shift when FFPOs become more market oriented (Bijman, 2016). This research aims at documenting best practices in internal governance as well as exploring practical tactics on how this can be adopted by FFPOs. It is hoped that this will enhance the critical role that FFPOs play in improving livelihoods and inclusive climate and nature action.

1.3 Principles of good internal governance

Compliance with tenets of good governance has been heralded as the backbone of successful organisations (European Banking Authority, 2021). Several authors document what they consider as key principles of good internal governance (for example Graham et al., 2003; Addink, 2019; Forest and Farm Facility, 2023). Some of these principles include democracy, accountability, transparency and solidarity, among others. From the various frameworks on good internal governance, the synthesis below distils such principles down to three. These three main organisational principles of internal governance accommodate most if not all the other aspects of good governance that have been highlighted by different authors:

- **Organisational trust** (which encompasses aspects such as solidarity, peer-to-peer respect, democracy, structural equalities, reciprocity and legitimacy)
- **Organisational integrity** (which encompasses aspects such as internal and external consistency, fairness, equity, transparency, accountability and rule of law).
- **Organisational purpose** (which encompasses aspects such as shared and evolving direction, listening, learning and responsiveness).

If properly applied, these principles of good governance can result in outcomes for organisational members such as structural belonging (good governance builds a sense of trust, solidarity and belonging), efficient systems (good governance builds integrity, consistency and efficiency) and positive practices (good governance builds purpose and direction). A schematic of this distilled set of good governance principles is presented in Figure 2. From the definitions provided, it can be said that internal governance is about 'who decides what'. The ensuing sections will attempt to shed more light on each element:

- Who (trust and belonging)
- Decides (integrity and efficient systems)
- What (purpose and positive practices) of internal governance.

Figure 2. A framework for good internal governance that applies to FFPOs



2

Trust: building internal organisational belonging and commitment

2.1 Why build organisational trust?

Organisational trust is a fundamental building block of organisations (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2010; Gillespie and Siebert 2018) and this is especially true of member-based organisations that are steered by some form of democracy. Trust within organisations facilitates social exchange, cooperation and effective organising (Gustafsson et al., 2021). Therefore, organisations that can develop trusting relationships can greatly enhance their competitive advantage (Huff and Kelley 2003). But for members to trust their organisation, they must have a strong sense of belonging. This desire to 'belong', to gain a sense of social acceptance and validation, and to build lasting and profound connections with others is a powerful force that can motivate, fulfil and unify people towards a common vision (Bryer, 2020; Imboden, 2024; Sehmi, 2021). Indeed, "to belong is to matter" (Lambert et al., 2013).

Several factors contribute to fostering a sense of belonging among organisation members, such as its vision, membership guidelines, internal communication, recruitment procedures and work planning (Miranda-Wolff, 2022; Sehmi, 2021). But how do we build trust in organisations? It is by having the right structures, supportive systems and practices in place that encourage and foster member trust in the organisations. The ensuing sections highlight some of the ways to build internal organisational trust.

2.2 What structural issues affect trust and belonging?

Structural issues can affect the sense of trust and belonging within an FFPO, either fostering a sense of belonging or creating barriers that hinder it. Addressing these structural issues is essential for promoting a positive and inclusive work environment where employees feel valued and connected to the organisation. Selected structural issues that affect trust and belonging within an organisation include:

- **Written constitution:** A clear constitution and inclusive mission, vision and set of values help align members' goals and foster a sense of shared purpose. Good governance ensures these elements are well-defined and communicated, creating a cohesive organisational culture where everyone feels they belong (Esnard, 2021; Pološki Vokić et al., 2021)

- **Formal registration and legal standards:** Legal recognition and adherence to standards ensure legitimacy and accountability, which help build trust and belonging among members. Good governance involves maintaining these standards consistently (Esnard, 2021). Adherence to legal standards enhances organisational justice, a crucial factor in generating trust within organisations (Saz-Gil et al., 2021).
- **Inclusive general assembly:** Regular reporting to an inclusive general assembly ensures transparency and member engagement, promoting a sense of ownership and belonging. Good governance includes efforts to ensure active participation of members in these assemblies through different strategies such as clear communication in advance about annual general meetings (AGMs).
- **Gender balance/quotas on leadership committees:** Establishing gender quotas is a key step toward ensuring inclusive and representative participation. Effective governance involves not only setting these quotas but also maintaining them to promote equity. Recent research by Lo Preiato and Bannò (2025) highlights that clear and enforceable quota policies tend to produce stronger and more meaningful inclusion. Complementing this, forming women's groups alongside regular meetings helps address gender-specific issues and ensures their voices are heard. Good governance supports these groups and integrates their feedback into organisational practices — for example, an FFPO in Ghana has established several village-level women's groups to strengthen gender-responsive decision making.
- **Written organogram:** Clearly defined organisational structures with specific departments (for example, finance, HR and operations) help members understand their roles and how they contribute to the organisation's goals. Organisational structure outlines executive, managerial and administrative roles, defines responsibilities and hierarchies, and establishes workflows and reporting systems. Essentially, it acts as the company's framework: clarifying roles, authority and coordination mechanisms. Additionally, it shapes how communication and knowledge flow across the organisation, ensuring clarity and efficiency in operations (Lazarević-Moravčević and Mosurović Ružičić, 2023). Good governance ensures these structures are transparent and accessible.
- **Division of operational/technical services:** Providing specialised support services helps meet members' needs effectively, enhancing their sense of belonging. Good governance involves organising and delivering these services efficiently.
- **Various units for extension and advocacy:** Dedicated units for business, logistics and communications, for monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL), and for advocacy ensure comprehensive support and representation. Good governance involves establishing and maintaining these units to address diverse needs.
- **Accounting department with digitised finances:** Transparent and publicly audited financial systems build trust and accountability, which are critical for belonging. Good governance involves maintaining these systems with accuracy and transparency.

A well-defined organisational structure provides the framework for defining roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships within an organisation (Jerab and Mabrouk, 2023). This is critical as it promotes communication, clarity, flexibility and accountability, driving member satisfaction and the overall success of organisations. Tackling structural challenges means addressing power issues. Moving from hierarchical to more horizontal structures encourages openness and cooperation. It ensures fair treatment for all employees. By creating an inclusive, less hierarchical framework, the organisation can boost the feeling of belonging among its members and workforce (Laloux, 2014; Bryer, 2020).

2.3 What systems issues affect trust and belonging?

There are various systems issues that affect belonging within an organisation. These issues as well as their potential impact on belonging and what good governance might look like include:

- **Constitutional systems:** A clear and aligned vision, mission and bylaws are crucial for promoting a shared sense of purpose (Chakraborty et al., 2024). Good internal governance involves co-creating these elements, ensuring every member feels valued and part of something significant. This approach enhances connection and appreciation within the organisation.

- **Policies and procedures:** Clear and inclusive policies build trust and belonging. Too many restrictions can stifle creativity and make employees feel disconnected. Good governance means keeping systems simple, trusting employees' motivation, and regularly updating policies to stay relevant. Effective conflict resolution also helps build trust and belonging.
- **Financial accounting systems:** Trust in the financial systems of an organisation is critical to the sustainability of any organisation. When members are assured that their revenues are safe and that any distribution of profits or salaries will be reliable and secure, their sense of belonging in the organisation is enhanced.
- **Leadership and decision-making systems:** Clear roles and fair decision making are essential for trust and belonging. When responsibilities are well-defined and decisions are made equitably, everyone feels valued and utilised (Miranda-Wolff, 2022; Sehmi, 2021). Good governance ensures fair rule application and equitable sharing of responsibilities and rewards.
- **Human resources and performance evaluation systems:** Fair and transparent performance evaluations are key to making employees feel valued and supported. Recognising contributions consistently helps build a strong sense of belonging. Good governance ensures these systems are clear and unbiased, fostering a positive and supportive environment.

Addressing these systems issues is crucial for creating a culture of belonging and engagement within an organisation. When the vision, mission, policies and roles align with employees' values and wellbeing, it creates a more inclusive and welcoming workplace (Chakraborty et al., 2024). Clear governance, fair decision making and transparent evaluations help everyone feel valued and connected, enhancing trust and support throughout the organisation.

2.4 What practice issues affect trust and belonging?

The majority of organisations have traditionally attempted to mobilise employees' sense of belonging through mission statements, visions and values (Bryer 2020). However, these methods have faced criticism for not effectively addressing the exclusivity within organisations. Instead, adopting good governance practices that foster a culture of inclusivity can be more effective in cultivating a true sense of belonging among members of an organisation (Bryer, 2020).

Practice issues affecting belonging within an organisation encompass elements such as membership criteria, work planning inclusivity, internal communication transparency and fair recruitment practices. Good governance in these areas involves co-creating clear and inclusive visions and missions, transparent membership criteria and responsibilities, participatory work planning, effective internal communication channels, and equitable recruitment practices. For example, involving members in the budgeting process can help them work through common exclusionary tendencies and associated tensions in organisations, helping them realise the positive transformational effects of belonging (Bryer, 2020). A summary of practices that might affect belonging is listed below:

- **Diversity and inclusion practices:** Promoting a culture that values diversity, equity and inclusion helps members feel respected and valued for their unique contributions. This improves a sense of belonging among members (Samuel et al., 2025). Good internal governance entails implementing policies that promote diversity and inclusion, such as anti-discrimination policies, diversity training and inclusive hiring practices. Regularly reviewing and updating these policies ensures they remain effective and relevant.
- **Annual reflection, workplans and targets:** Encouraging participatory approaches in developing workplans and targets allows members to actively contribute to setting annual responsibilities, fostering a strong sense of ownership and belonging. Good governance ensures that all relevant stakeholders are involved in the planning process, promoting transparency and inclusivity. It also involves setting clear, measurable goals and regularly reviewing progress to make necessary adjustments.
- **Internal communications:** Ensuring transparent and effective internal communication channels keeps members well-informed about decisions, benefits and organisational happenings, thereby promoting a sense of belonging. Good internal governance establishes multiple communication channels (such as newsletters, meetings, intranet) to ensure information is accessible to all members. It encourages open dialogue and feedback to continuously improve communication practices.

- **Social practices:** Scheduling retreats, work meals and other team-building events into the calendar enhances the sense of community within the organisation, strengthening trust and belonging. Good internal governance allocates resources and time for regular social activities. It ensures these activities are inclusive and cater to diverse interests and needs, fostering a sense of community and belonging.
- **Fair human resource practices:** Implementing fair and equitable terms and conditions for all employees, ensuring unbiased hiring practices, and promoting workforce diversity exemplify good governance in recruitment and HR, reinforcing a sense of fairness and inclusion. Good internal governance involves developing and enforcing clear HR policies that promote fairness and equity. It also includes regularly auditing HR practices to ensure compliance and address any biases or disparities.
- **Empathetic leadership behaviours:** Leaders play a vital role in creating a sense of belonging. When leaders demonstrate empathy, actively listen and support their team members, it builds trust and unity (Miranda-Wolff, 2022; Sehmi, 2021). Encouraging leaders to mentor and champion initiatives from diverse groups can also strengthen this feeling. Good internal governance promotes leadership training focused on empathy, active listening and inclusive leadership. It encourages leaders to mentor and support diverse initiatives and team members.
- **Personal relationships:** Building strong, meaningful relationships among team members is essential. Encouraging collaboration, open dialogue and mutual support helps employees feel connected and part of a larger community. Regular team-building activities and social events can also foster these connections. Good internal governance promotes a collaborative culture through team-building activities and encourages open communication. It supports initiatives that foster mutual respect and understanding among team members.
- **Recognition and appreciation:** Regularly recognising and appreciating employees' efforts and achievements can significantly boost their sense of belonging. This can be done through formal recognition programmes, shout-outs in meetings or simple 'thank you' notes. Good internal governance promotes the establishment of formal recognition programmes that are fair and transparent. It ensures that recognition is meaningful and aligned with the organisation's values and goals.
- **Professional development practices:** Providing opportunities for growth and development shows employees that the organisation is invested in their future. This can include offering training programmes, career advancement opportunities, and support for continuous learning. Good internal governance promotes investment in comprehensive training and development programmes. It also includes regularly assessing the effectiveness of these programmes and adjusting based on feedback and changing needs.
- **Safe and open environment:** Creating a safe space where employees feel comfortable expressing their ideas and concerns without fear of judgment or retaliation is crucial. This involves promoting psychological safety and encouraging open, honest communication. Good internal governance implements policies that protect employees' rights to express their ideas and concerns. It provides training on psychological safety and ensures that all feedback is taken seriously and addressed appropriately.

By implementing these practices, organisations can create a more inclusive and supportive environment where all members feel they belong and can thrive.

3

Efficiency: shaping organisational integrity

3.1 Why does organisational integrity matter?

Kaptein (2024) argues that without organisational integrity, there is no organisation. Organisational integrity is all about each bit of an organisation contributing to the organisation's overall goals and performing its role, without interfering unduly with other parts of the organisation. Think of it as a set of interlinked but separate cogs in a smoothly running gearbox, transferring power from the engine to the tyres on the road. Organisational integrity is essential for the smooth running or efficiency of an organisation, building trust between members, employees and customers, ensuring legal compliance, and fostering a positive workplace culture. It strengthens an organisation's reputation, attracting customers, investors and top talent, while also mitigating risks and contributing to long-term sustainability and success (Kayes et al., 2007; Fuerst and Luetge 2021; Sabil et al., 2021). Organisational integrity manifests in corporate behaviour and actions (Fuerst et al., 2023).

3.2 How internal governance shapes organisational integrity

Effective synergy between what an organisation is seeking to offer those it serves as clients, and what it expects from its own staff through internal rules and standards, can significantly improve staff motivation and problem-solving outcomes. In essence, organisational integrity is achieved when the structure aligns with the values it aims to uphold (Breakey et al., 2016). The following sections provide a conceptual definition of organisational integrity and explore how internal governance components (such as structure, systems and practical elements) influence it.

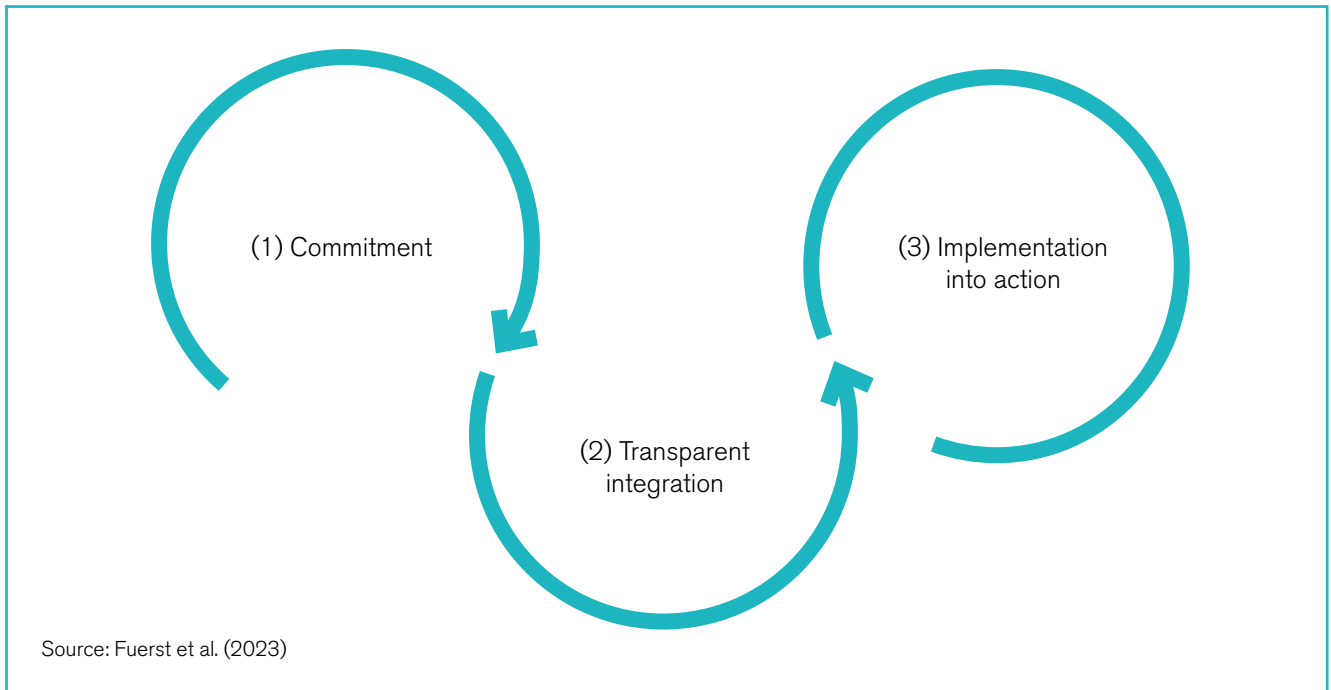
Fuerst and Luetge (2021, p.6) define organisational integrity as:

The integral ability of a company to practice self-fidelity in the sense that its activities are based upon an internally consistent framework of principles and reflects to which extent self-legislated norms and legal standards in force are implemented into organisational actions. A certain maturity is required regarding the company's infrastructure, its CID [corporate internal decision] structures. Organisational integrity includes the ability to self-evaluate and incorporates awareness of both its own organisational strengths and weaknesses, resulting in the ability to further mature (in the sense of further develop). Finally, organisational integrity is in need of desirable moral principles like legal compliance, honesty, and respect.

Organisational integrity is best observed through an organisation's practices rather than being merely a corporate ambition. Fuerst et al. (2023) have outlined a three-stage model, known as the organisational integrity triad (see

Figure 3). This triad offers a comprehensive understanding of organisational integrity, where all three aspects are interconnected, and collectively they define it.

Figure 3. The organisational integrity triad with its three manifestation degrees



- Commitment:** An organisation that has integrity will demonstrate commitment to its values by publicly expressing and recording its institutional position or self-legislated norms on a certain topic that is in the interest of the stakeholders and on which no position is obligatory from a legal point of view. Additionally, and ideally, commitments are demanding and costly rather than for show (Fuerst et al., 2023). For example, an organisation that believes in minimising the use of agrochemicals might state its commitment to organic production — even if this increases the cost of inputs to maintain production volumes.
- Transparent integration:** This refers to the implementation of the position or self-legislated norm into an organisation's internal structures (Fuerst et al., 2023). In the example of an organisation committed to organic agriculture, this might involve setting up departments for organic fertiliser procurement or production, and perhaps a department responsible for organic certification, or having a staff post linked to sustainability.
- Implementation into action:** This entails compliance with the organisation's commitments by embedding them into its systems and practices. For example, a company committed to organic production would then ensure that agronomic practices reflected that commitment, and that labelling and traceability allowed that to be demonstrated to customers. But the organisation might also ensure that its internal catering also only uses organic products, and that staff are able to recycle and reuse office materials.

Good internal governance and organisational integrity are interlinked. Integrity involves staying true to the organisational values (Breakey et al., 2016) — which, when these are well known and applied, can lead to significant efficiencies in how the organisation pursues its values. Organisational integrity also refers to the ethical integrity of the individual actors, the ethical quality of their interaction as well as that of the dominating norms, activities, decision-making procedures and results within a given organisation (Palazzo, 2007).

Evaluating the quality of internal governance of organisations is important for its success. Several frameworks have been developed and this section presents two: the Cadman framework (Cadman, 2009) and another developed by Breakey et al. (2016). In the Cadman framework, 'principles' serve as the foundational guidelines for good governance, 'criteria' are the specific conditions that must be met to achieve these principles, and 'indicators' are the measurable elements used to evaluate whether the criteria are being met, creating a hierarchical system to assess governance quality in various contexts. Table 1 summarises the Cadman framework.

Table 1. Principles, criteria and indicators in the Cadman framework

Principle	Criterion	Indicator
Meaningful participation	Interest representation	Inclusiveness Equality Resources (capacity building)
	Organisational responsibility	Accountability Transparency
Productive deliberation	Decision making	Democracy Agreement Dispute settlement
	Implementation	Behavioural change Problem solving Durability

The table by Breakey and Cadman outlines the progression of governance values from ‘thin’ to ‘thickish’ to ‘fully thick’ (see Table 2). It illustrates how governance practices can evolve from minimal, basic standards to more comprehensive, inclusive and robust frameworks, enhancing legitimacy and effectiveness in various contexts. ‘Thin’ governance includes accountability, transparency, compliance and rule of law. ‘Thickish’ governance adds democratic elements, some capacity building, and inclusion of some non-state actors. ‘Fully thick’ governance further includes deliberative processes, extensive capacity building, inclusion of all stakeholders, equality in decision making, and dispute settlement strategies. All levels aim to avoid gridlock, with ‘thickish’ and ‘fully thick’ governance also focusing on functionality and problem solving.

Table 2. The expansion of governance values from ‘thin’ to ‘thickish’ and ‘fully thick’

Types of factors	Thin governance values	Thickish governance values	Fully thick governance values
Procedural and/or structural factors	Accountability	Accountability	Accountability
	Transparency	Transparency	Transparency
	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
	Rule of law	Rule of law	Rule of law
			Democratic
			Degrees of capacity building
			Inclusion of some non-state actors
Efficacy factors	Avoid gridlock	Avoid gridlock	Deliberative
			Democratic
			Extensive capacity building
			Inclusion of all stakeholders
			Stakeholders’ equality in decision making
			Strategies for dispute settlement
			Avoid gridlock
			Functional
			Effective and problem solving

Kayes et al. (2007) outline the four main traits displayed by organisations that have integrity:

- **The language of ethical decision making is used:** Employees openly and confidently discuss the ethical implications of their actions. For instance, in the case study of AOPEB in Chapter 6, the FFPO encountered a situation involving a procedural error that could have compromised product standards. Rather than proceeding with distribution, the organisation chose to pause operations, correct the issue and ensure full compliance — even at significant financial cost. This decision reflected a strong commitment to integrity and transparency, reinforcing trust among members, partners and consumers. This mistake could have led to the sale of uncertified products, potentially damaging the trust of consumers and partners. Recognising the gravity of the situation, the management decided to halt the distribution of the affected products and re-certify them, despite the substantial financial loss and operational delays this decision entailed. This corrective action underscored AOPEB's commitment to integrity and transparency, ensuring that their products met the highest standards and maintained consumer trust.
- **Structural support and systems that facilitate ethical decision making have been developed:** Employees have a clear channel to air and discuss problems, escalate issues and explore grey areas of compliance. A good tactic might entail institutionalisation of some form complaint- or conflict-resolution system that will ensure there is confidentiality and prevention of retribution for employees who report breach of integrity.
- **A culture of openness, responsibility and commitment to multiple business goals has been created and sustained:** This is evidenced by employees' ability to articulate a range of business objectives beyond financial performance, including social responsibility, professional integrity and employee wellbeing. Research shows that organisational cultures characterised by shared values, openness and employee involvement significantly influence commitment and alignment with broader organisational goals (Tadesse Bogale and Debela, 2024). Moreover, empirical studies confirm a positive relationship between organisational culture and employee commitment, suggesting that when employees perceive their organisation as supportive and value-driven, they are more likely to internalise and advocate for its multifaceted mission (Aranki et al., 2019).
- **Employee development is valued:** Employees have frequent chances for personal and career growth within the organisation. These opportunities make individuals feel valuable and connect personal success to the organisation's success, influencing them to make decisions that benefit the organisation in the long run.

3.3 What structural issues affect organisational integrity?

Organisational structures set limits for employee activities and the signals they send might be stronger than those given by codes of conduct. The level of empowerment embedded in organisational structures has been widely examined for its impact on integrity in decision making. Treviño et al. (2006) described this aspect as “the locus of control”. People with an internal locus of control have the impression that outcomes result from their efforts while people with an external locus of control regard events as being beyond their control. She concludes that:

Managers whose locus of control is internal will exhibit more consistency between moral judgment and moral action than managers whose locus of control is external (Trevino, 1996, p.610).

Some select structural issues that can affect development pathways within an organisation include:

- **Management team leadership:** The composition and effectiveness of the management team play a crucial role in developing organisational integrity and efficient systems and practices in pursuit of it. A capable and visionary management team can provide clear direction in the pursuit of values including those of fairness, equity, transparency and accountability, while ineffective leadership can hinder progress.
- **Board of directors:** The board's oversight and decision making can also influence the strategic direction of the organisation, the values it pursues, and the integrity and efficiency of how it does those things. An engaged and diverse board can support and guide development pathways towards such organisational integrity, whereas an uninvolved or homogeneous board may limit opportunities for growth.
- **Departmental structures:** The organisation's departmental structures can help to institutionalise the commitment of an organisation to particular values. A well-structured and coordinated set of departments can facilitate a more

efficient and organised approach to working those values out, while an overly complex or fragmented structure may impede progress.

- **Hierarchy levels:** The level of hierarchy and the extent to which decision making is centralised can influence development pathways. A flatter organisational structure with decentralised decision making can promote agility and innovation in the pursuit of organisational commitment to certain values, while a highly hierarchical structure may slow down the process.

Addressing these structural issues and ensuring effective coordination and communication among management, the board, departments and hierarchical levels is essential for creating clear and efficient development pathways within an organisation.

3.4 What systems issues affect organisational integrity?

The systems that an organisation puts in place can also define organisational integrity. James (2000), for instance, argues that three strongly related dimensions of organisational systems affect staff behaviour: systems governing monetary and non-monetary rewards; systems governing performance evaluation, monitoring and control for individuals and business units; and systems of portioning and assigning decision-making rights and responsibilities to workers, including job design and level of empowerment. Some of the main systems that can affect organisational integrity include:

- **Constitutional systems:** Constitutional systems define the vision, goals and objectives of an organisation. These systems set the tone for organisational culture and behaviour, ensuring all members understand and align with the organisation's mission and values, which is crucial for maintaining integrity.
- **Decision-making systems:** Effective decision-making systems are essential for organisational integrity. Transparent and inclusive decision-making processes build trust and accountability.
- **Business planning and sustainability systems:** These systems ensure organisational commitments are reflected in operations (for example, for FFPOs these might include land management, production, processing and distribution). Integrating sustainability into business planning demonstrates a commitment to ethical practices and long-term viability.
- **Monetary and non-monetary reward systems:** It is important to ensure that these systems reflect organisational commitments to fairness and equity. Transparent and fair compensation practices build trust and loyalty among employees, which is essential for organisational cohesion and ethical behaviour.
- **Performance evaluation systems:** If they are transparent and fair, these systems can significantly enhance organisational integrity. Regular, unbiased evaluations that provide constructive feedback help employees understand their strengths and areas for improvement, fostering a culture of continuous development and trust.
- **Monitoring and control systems:** Effective monitoring and control systems ensure that organisational activities align with established standards and ethical guidelines. These systems help in identifying and addressing any deviations promptly, maintaining accountability and integrity throughout the organisation.
- **Ethical compliance systems:** Ethical compliance systems ensure that all organisational activities adhere to legal and ethical standards. Regular audits, compliance training and clear reporting mechanisms for unethical behaviour help maintain high standards of integrity.

By implementing and continuously improving these systems, organisations can strengthen their integrity, build trust among stakeholders, and ensure long-term success.

3.5 What practice issues affect organisational integrity?

The practices of an organisation can either promote ethical or unethical behaviour (Palazzo 2007). Inconsistencies between ethics training programmes and everyday practices might provoke cynicism and disorientation, while inconsistencies between organisational norms and values and structural incentives might even directly trigger the wrong behaviour (Palazzo, 2007, p.120).

There are four key practices that shape organisational integrity: operation controls, principles and purpose, core values, and organisational culture (Kayes et al., 2007).

- **Practices that integrate principles and purpose into everyday operations:** Principles and purpose guide transparent organisations, irrespective of their size or industry. Transparency involves disclosing information, except for valid privacy and legal reasons. Going beyond legal requirements positions organisations to better meet evolving business expectations. Embedding principles and purpose into organisational practices extends beyond controls and compliance. Organisations that embed their core principles — such as community empowerment, equity and sustainability — into daily operations tend to demonstrate stronger alignment between values and performance. This integration goes beyond compliance and legal obligations, positioning organisations to meet evolving expectations around transparency and accountability (for example, some locally controlled forest businesses incorporate regular reflection and consultation processes to ensure strategic decisions remain grounded in their foundational values). Financial transparency is often upheld through robust accounting systems and routine audits, reinforcing a culture of integrity. These practices illustrate how principles and purpose can be woven into governance, planning and performance measures across diverse organisational contexts (Kayes et al., 2007).
- **Core values:** To use an example from the Nepal case study in Chapter 6, the Binh Minh Agroforestry Cooperative (BMAC) emphasises three core values: sustainability, integrity and community. Sustainability underscores the cooperative's commitment to environmentally friendly practices and long-term forest management. Integrity emphasises ethical behaviour, transparency and mutual respect in all relationships, ensuring that business practices are conducted with honesty and accountability. Community focuses on collaboration, open communication and collective problem solving, promoting a cohesive and supportive environment for all members. These values extend beyond profits, reflecting a broader role in the economic and social community, showcasing that integrity involves more than just customers: it includes various stakeholders such as employees, partners and the local community.
- **Organisational culture of integrity:** By far the most elusive of the four practices is building a culture of integrity. Culture appears not in formal organisational controls, but in informal actions and values underlying business practices. Like formal controls, culture can control behaviour, but through the tacit or hidden beliefs and practices of the organisation. Organisational integrity requires building ethical awareness into the culture.
- **Accounting practices:** Operating controls are crucial for organisational integrity, encompassing compliance, oversight and accounting functions. Accurate reporting is essential, regardless of an organisation's size, to mitigate risk. These controls establish policies and procedures, ensuring compliance with external and internal guidelines. Integration with performance-measurement systems is key, providing validation for required procedures. Effective communication and training are often overlooked but vital aspects of operating controls. They help employees understand system changes and accelerate compliance with operational rules (Kayes et al., 2007).

4

Effectiveness: achieving organisational purpose

Attaining organisational effectiveness is a key objective for any organisation, requiring attention to various factors that influence performance (Darmawan, 2024). But to achieve the desired outcomes, organisations need to have supportive structures, systems and practices in place. At an individual level, organisational members need to be committed and proactive to make the organisation effective.

Ensuring that the organisation's purpose is genuinely shared by all is a key part of that commitment and proactivity and needs to be built on shared knowledge of the purpose of interest, co-creation/identification of the purpose and an equal opportunity for all organisational members to contribute to the realisation of the desired purpose. This shared purpose leads to positive outcomes at an individual level (more commitment, proactivity and willingness of members to take extra roles) and at a collective level (more unity and increased profitability).

The attainment of organisational purpose is the primary focus of many organisations. But for that to happen, there are foundational principles (such as strategy and accountability), as well as enabling governance principles (such as stakeholder engagement and leadership), which must align. When all the conditions are met, we have desired internal governance outcomes such as effective performance and ethical behaviour.

To understand how internal governance contributes to the success of FFPOs, it is essential to examine the relationship between an organisation's **purpose**, the **principles** that guide its governance, and the **outcomes** that result.

Figure 4 presents a layered framework that illustrates this relationship. It is structured into four key components that summarises how organisational purpose can be attained leading to desired governance outcomes:

- **Primary governance principle: Purpose**

At the heart of the framework is **organisational purpose** — the central reason for the organisation's existence. This includes a shared and evolving direction, responsiveness to member needs, and a commitment to continuous learning. Purpose drives strategic clarity, member engagement and long-term relevance.

- **Foundational governance principles**

Surrounding the core purpose are four foundational principles that shape how the organisation is governed:

- **Strategy:** The deliberate planning and prioritisation of actions to achieve the organisation's goals.
- **Oversight:** Mechanisms for monitoring performance, ensuring compliance and maintaining accountability.
- **Value generation:** The creation of economic, social and environmental benefits for members and stakeholders.
- **Accountability:** Transparent and responsible decision making that builds trust and legitimacy.

● Enabling governance principles

These principles support the implementation of governance and ensure it remains adaptive and inclusive:

- **Stakeholder engagement:** Active involvement of members, partners and communities in decision making.
- **Leadership:** Competent, ethical and representative leadership that guides the organisation.
- **Data and decisions:** Use of evidence and information systems to inform governance choices.
- **Risk governance:** Identification and management of risks to ensure resilience and continuity.
- **Social responsibility:** Commitment to equity, inclusion and environmental stewardship.
- **Variability and performance over time:** Capacity to adapt, learn and improve governance practices over time.

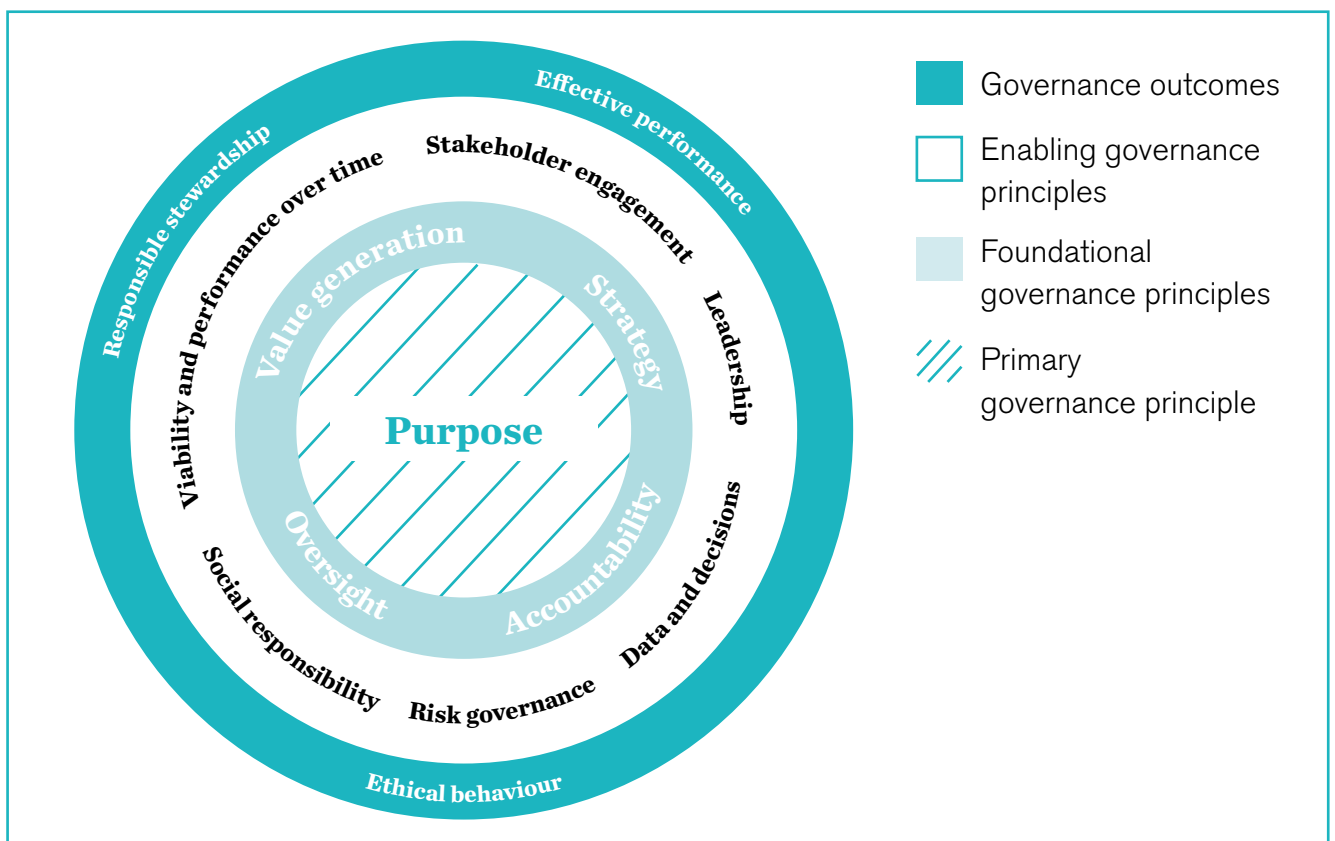
● Governance outcomes

When purpose and principles are effectively aligned, they lead to three key outcomes:

- **Ethical behaviour:** Consistent adherence to values, rules and norms in organisational conduct.
- **Responsible stewardship:** Sustainable management of resources and equitable benefit sharing.
- **Effective performance:** Achievement of strategic goals and delivery of meaningful results for members.

This framework provides a holistic view of internal governance, emphasising that good governance is not only about structures and compliance but also about cultivating purpose-driven leadership, inclusive systems and ethical practices. It serves as a foundation for FFPOs to assess and strengthen their governance in pursuit of sustainable impact.

Figure 4. Organisational purpose, principles and its various governance outcomes



4.1 What structural issues affect effectiveness?

There are various structural issues that might affect organisational effectiveness. Some of the structural issues, how they might affect organisational effectiveness, and what good governance might look like in each instance include:

- **Departmental job roles and pay disparities:** Equal job roles and pay scales across departments foster a sense of fairness and inclusion, enhancing employee satisfaction, motivation and trust in the organisation.

- **Organisational hierarchy and communication structure:** A flexible hierarchy combined with efficient communication channels encourages the seamless flow of information, empowers employees and enhances collaboration, fostering quicker and more informed decision making (Davies and Buisine, 2024; Meissner et al., 2024).
- **Collaborative and integrated departments:** Encouraging cross-departmental collaboration and breaking down silos strengthens teamwork and fosters innovation, leading to more efficient and impactful organisational outcomes.
- **Optimising hierarchical bureaucracy:** Reduced layers of hierarchy and streamlined administrative systems foster faster decision making and adaptability. By creating a more agile organisational structure, teams can respond effectively to challenges and seize opportunities with greater efficiency (Meissner et al., 2024).
- **Succession planning:** Developing and implementing robust succession plans ensures continuity and stable leadership during transitions, making organisation more effective.
- **Resource allocation and utilisation:** Optimising resource allocation and utilisation is crucial for achieving organisational goals and maximising opportunities, leading to more efficient and effective outcomes.

Fixing these structural issues is key to better performance, fairness and sustainability for FFPOs. These factors greatly impact how well FFPOs achieve their goals. Improving these areas will help FFPOs succeed.

4.2 What systems issues affect effectiveness?

There are various systems issues that affect organisational outcomes such as benefit-sharing rules and procedures, and transparency of finance and administration. A brief description of how these issues affect outcomes and how 'good governance' comes into play is provided below:

- **Benefit-sharing rules and procedures:** The rules and procedures governing how benefits (such as profits or incentives) are distributed among employees and stakeholders can impact morale, motivation and overall organisational performance. Fair and transparent benefit-sharing mechanisms can foster a positive work environment and enhance outcomes.
- **Transparency in finance and administration:** The level of transparency in financial and administrative processes influences trust and accountability within the organisation. Clear financial reporting and open administrative procedures can lead to better decision making and improved organisational outcomes, as stakeholders have a clearer understanding of how resources are managed.
- **Performance evaluation and feedback mechanisms:** The methods used to evaluate employee performance and provide feedback can directly affect individual and team productivity. Effective performance evaluation systems that offer constructive feedback and recognise achievements can boost motivation and, in turn, influence overall outcomes positively.
- **Communication and information flows:** Effective communication and information flows within an organisation are critical for coordination, collaboration and decision making. A lack of clear communication channels and information sharing can lead to misunderstandings and inefficiencies, impacting outcomes.
- **Conflict-resolution processes:** Organisations with well-defined and fair conflict-resolution procedures can manage disputes more efficiently, preserving working relationships and preventing conflicts from escalating and negatively affecting outcomes.
- **Resource allocation:** How an organisation allocates its resources, such as time, budget and manpower, can directly impact its ability to execute projects, meet goals and ultimately achieve favourable outcomes. By optimising how resources are distributed and utilised, organisations can enhance efficiency, seize opportunities and improve overall performance.
- **Organisational culture:** The organisational culture, including values, norms and the overall work environment, can shape employee behaviour and motivation. A positive, inclusive culture that aligns with the organisation's goals can enhance employee commitment and contribute to better outcomes.

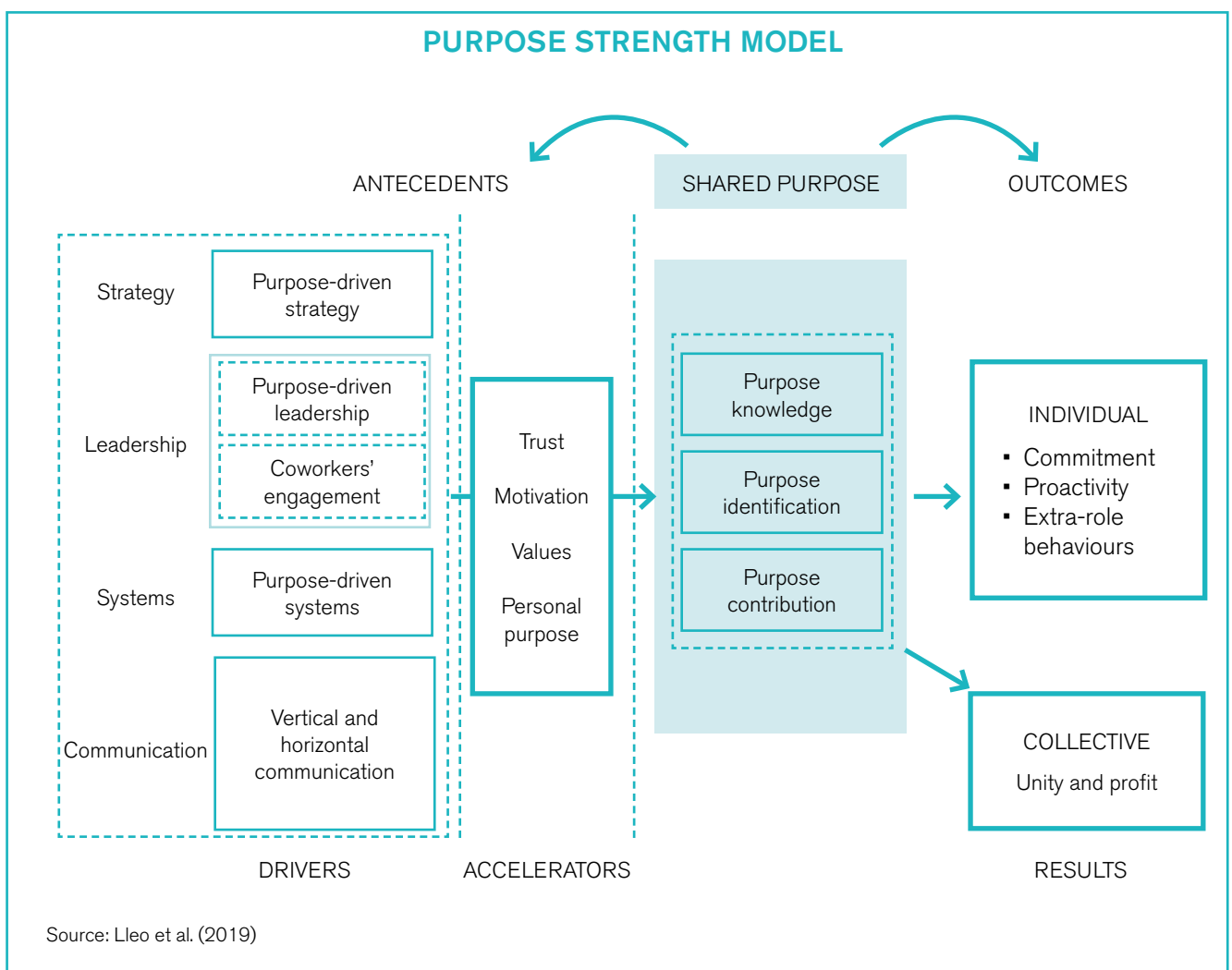
- **Innovation and continuous improvement practices:** The extent to which an organisation encourages innovation and continuous improvement can influence its ability to adapt, stay competitive and achieve long-term success. Embracing innovation and having mechanisms for ongoing improvement can drive positive outcomes.
- **Talent management and development:** How an organisation recruits, retains and develops its talent pool plays a crucial role in determining its performance. Effective talent management, including training and development programmes, can enhance employee skills and contribute to better outcomes.
- **Compliance and ethics:** Adherence to legal and ethical standards is essential for an organisation's reputation and sustainability. Violations of compliance or ethical standards can lead to legal troubles, damaged reputation and adverse outcomes.

These systems issues collectively influence an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives and determine the overall success and sustainability of the organisation. Addressing these issues is vital for organisational effectiveness.

4.3 What practice issues affect effectiveness?

For organisations to achieve the desired outcomes, there must be a supportive suite of practices. Lleo et al. (2019) in their purpose strength model (see Figure 5) propose four key drivers for organisational outcome: a purpose-driven strategy, purpose-driven leadership, worker engagement, purpose-driven systems and effective communication (vertical and horizontal). They argue that 'purpose accelerators' such as trust, motivation, values and personal purpose need to be there to enhance the realisation of the desired organisational outcomes.

Figure 5. A model for achieving organisational outcomes



There is also strength in diversity. Workforce **diversity** can enhance **organisational effectiveness** (Li et al., 2021) as well as organisational **efficiency** (Inegbedion et al., 2020). Organisations that have entrenched practices of onboarding a diverse group of new members or employees (covering different genders, ages, ethnicities and physical abilities) have been shown to be more resilient, sustainable and profitable in the long run (Inegbedion et al., 2020). For example, by hiring multiple talents from different backgrounds, an organisation can enhance innovation leading to better products and services for its clients (Yadav and Lenka, 2020). Additionally, workplace diversity leads to rapid adaptability, availability of a greater variety of alternative techniques for solving problems, in-service sourcing, and allocation of resources. Other benefits are a wider range of services, diverse assemblage of skills/experiences, diverse languages and cultural backgrounds, and diverse viewpoints. The diverse assemblage of skills and experiences coupled with the variety of alternative techniques for solving problems leads to efficiency and effectiveness in the execution of projects (Inegbedion et al., 2020).

Good internal governance is not only about structures and systems — it is also reflected in the practices that shape how an organisation operates day to day. Among the most critical are human management practices, which include equity in treatment, fair compensation, mentorship, training and a supportive work environment. These practices directly influence an organisation's ability to attract and retain talent, foster innovation and sustain high performance.

Research shows that good human management practices — such as knowledge sharing, open communication, safeguarding and encouragement of creativity — are key drivers of organisational effectiveness (Anwar and Abdullah, 2021; Al Aina and Atan, 2020; Jeong and Shin, 2019; Abdelwhab Ali et al., 2019; Ahmed et al., 2020; Alshammari, 2020). Talented employees, often comprising just 3–5% of the workforce, are especially critical to organisational success, and their retention depends heavily on the quality of internal governance.

The following practices are particularly important for enhancing organisational effectiveness. Each reflects a dimension of good human management and aligns with the principles of accountability, learning and ethical conduct. Addressing these practice issues can enhance an organisation's effectiveness and ensure sustainable success. Practices that are particularly important for organisational effectiveness include:

- **Human resource management practices:** These encompass fair recruitment, equitable compensation, mentorship and employee wellbeing. Good governance ensures transparent HR policies, clear job descriptions and opportunities for career development.
- **Gender equity in compensation and career progression:** Promoting equal pay and advancement opportunities for all genders fosters an inclusive work culture, helping attract and retain diverse talent while driving innovation and organisational success.
- **Accountability practices:** The presence or absence of clear accountability mechanisms within an organisation can significantly impact outcomes. This includes defining responsibilities, tracking performance and ensuring consequences for actions. Good governance in accountability involves well-defined roles and responsibilities, transparent performance tracking, regular reporting and fair consequences for both successes and failures. It fosters a culture of responsibility and continuous improvement.
- **Performance evaluation and feedback practices:** The way an organisation conducts performance evaluations and provides feedback to its employees affects motivation, skill development and overall performance. Good governance in performance evaluation entails regular, constructive feedback that supports employees' growth and aligns with organisational goals. It encourages a culture of continuous learning and development.
- **Conflict-resolution procedures:** How an organisation handles conflicts, disputes and disagreements can impact workplace harmony and productive. Good governance in conflict resolution involves fair and impartial procedures, with a focus on finding mutually beneficial solutions. It promotes a harmonious work environment and prevents disruptions.
- **Ethical decision-making practices:** The ethical standards and decision-making processes in place can influence the organisation's reputation and trustworthiness. Good governance in ethics includes a strong commitment to ethical behaviour, a clear code of conduct, and processes for addressing ethical dilemmas. It ensures that the organisation maintains its integrity and credibility.

- **Training and development practices:** The effectiveness of training and development initiatives affects employee skill levels and the organisation's adaptability to change. Good governance in training and development offers accessible, relevant and up-to-date programmes that align with organisational goals. It empowers employees to enhance their skills and contribute to the organisation's success.
- **Innovation and knowledge sharing:** An organisation's culture of innovation and knowledge sharing can influence its adaptability and competitiveness. Good governance in innovation and knowledge sharing encourages open communication, rewards new ideas and provides channels for sharing knowledge. It fosters a culture of creativity and continuous improvement.

5

Why is internal governance in FFPOs important?

5.1 Organisations in forest and farm landscapes provide critical benefits

Forest and farm landscapes are dominated by smallholders who are the primary producers and suppliers of food, forest products and other resources for domestic consumption and trade in international markets. Together, smallholders are the world's largest private sector with a gross annual value of between US\$0.87 and 1.3 trillion (Verdone, 2018). They are also the most populous, comprising 1.5 billion smallholders that make up about 84% of the world's farms. Farms under two hectares globally produce 30–34% of food supply on 24% of gross agricultural area, suggesting greater aggregate productivity per unit area (Ricciardi et al., 2018). Smaller-scale farms orient more of their production towards food with farms less than five hectares producing 70% of the calories in the regions where they predominate (Samberg et al., 2016).

Together with Indigenous Peoples and local communities they steward over 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity, with Indigenous communities managing approximately 40% of all terrestrial protected areas and ecologically intact ecosystems globally. However, they face myriad challenges such as insecure land rights, poor access to finance, poor-quality infrastructure, remoteness and isolation from markets and decision-making powers, poor access to information, and exploitation by middlemen.

In remote areas, forest and farm producers often have to help themselves, through organisations that are growing rapidly in numbers and scale (see Pretty et al., 2020). In response to the challenges highlighted above, producer organisations are usually formed to help small-scale forest producers increase economies of scale, efficiently use resources, gain bargaining power and competitiveness, improve access to formal capital, input and product markets, and enhance political power (Tirivayi et al., 2018). Some of the critical benefits of forming a producer organisation include:

- **Market access — aggregating sufficient product volume to sell:** Individual smallholder forest and farm producers often face significant barriers to market access due to their limited production volumes and fragmented operations. FFPOs play a critical role in addressing these challenges by providing institutional infrastructure that enables collective market engagement. By organising producers, FFPOs facilitate the aggregation of products, which not only makes transportation and processing more efficient but also enhances the bargaining power of smallholders in market negotiations (Vargas Hill et al., 2021). Supporting this, a study by Bizikova et al. (2022) found that the most commonly offered service by producer organisations was “marketing services to increase product

sale”, cited by 54% of surveyed organisations. This underscores the central role of FFPOs in improving market access for smallholders through targeted marketing support.

- **Reduced costs of production:** FFPOs play a vital role in helping their members reduce both production costs and transaction costs. By facilitating collective action, these organisations enable smallholders to share resources such as equipment and labour, thereby lowering individual expenditures. Moreover, FFPOs enhance members' access to market information, strengthen their bargaining power and support the adoption of new technologies and entry into higher-value markets. These combined benefits contribute to more efficient and cost-effective production systems (Bernard et al., 2021).
- **Shared information — increasing price by improving quality, finding better buyers and technical support:** FFPOs play a pivotal role in improving the quality and marketability of smallholder products by facilitating access to shared information. Through collective structures, FFPOs enable producers to exchange technical knowledge, receive training on quality standards, and access market intelligence that helps identify better buyers and negotiate fairer prices. This shared information ecosystem not only enhances product quality but also empowers producers to meet market demands more effectively.
- **Advocacy voice — pushing for land and resource rights and more enabling policies:** FFPOs serve not only as economic and technical support structures but also as powerful platforms for advocacy. By organising smallholders, Indigenous Peoples, women and youth into cohesive groups, FFPOs amplify the voices of rural communities in policy dialogues, enabling them to push for secure land tenure, access to natural resources, and more inclusive and enabling policy environments.

Organised forest and farm groups can install strong representatives in multistakeholder policy dialogues of various sorts. These can help producers enter dialogue with governments, the private sector and civil society partners to debate and resolve difficult issues (Macqueen et al., 2015).

5.2 Why does good internal governance matter?

Good internal governance should be the beating heart of any organisation. To be successful, FFPOs need to entrench strong internal governance in their operations. Internal governance is essential in achieving set objectives/goals, delivering the right outcomes for stakeholders, and to the general improvement of the organisation. There are three key reasons why strong internal governance is critical for FFPOs.

- **Preserving and strengthening stakeholder confidence:** Disgruntled FFPO members and other stakeholders can destabilise or distract the organisation if they lack confidence in the governance of the institution. Conversely, strong internal governance can solidify support from members, resulting in social and emotional support.
- **Providing a foundation for high performance:** The achievement of goals and sustainable success requires input and support from all levels of an organisation. The board, through good governance practices, provides the framework for planning, implementation and monitoring of performance; without a foundation to build high performance upon, the achievement of this goal becomes problematic. Achievement of the best performance and results possible, within existing capacity and capability, should be an organisation's ongoing goal. Good governance should support management and staff to be 'the best they can be'.
- **Enhancing organisational resilience in the face of a changing external environment:** Businesses today operate in an environment of constant change. Technology has created an information age that has transformed our world, and for a business to both survive and remain profitable to enable it to fulfil its mission and achieve its vision, a system has to be in place to assist it to identify changes in both the external environment and emerging trends. This process of understanding our changing world does not happen by chance: it requires leadership, commitment and resources from the governing body to establish and maintain such a system within an organisation. Change generally does not happen overnight. Governing bodies, as the ultimate leaders of an organisation, should take prime responsibility for this activity.

In short, internal governance encompasses the processes by which organisations are directed, controlled and held to account. It includes the authority, accountability, leadership, direction and control exercised in an organisation. Greatness

can be achieved when good governance principles and practises are applied throughout the whole organisation and that is why governance is so important.

It is the central facilitation which looks at how organisations are run ethically and in the best interests of employees and citizens.

5.3 Why breakdowns in FFPOs can undermine those benefits

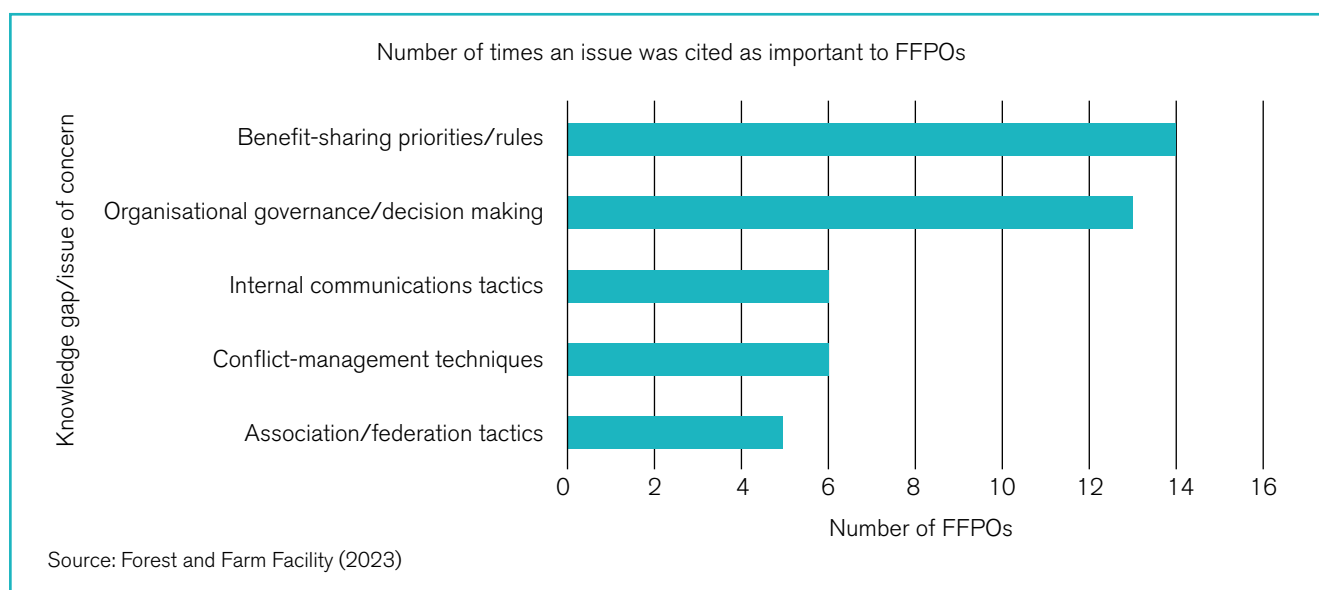
FFPOs are not only widespread but also economically significant. Conservative estimates suggest that the aggregate gross annual value of forest-dependent smallholder products — such as crops, fuelwood, charcoal, timber and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) — ranges between US\$881 billion and US\$1.51 trillion (Verdone, 2018). This positions FFPOs as a major economic force, potentially the largest private-sector grouping globally in terms of rural livelihoods and natural resource management.

Much of this value is derived from raw forest and farm products, indicating substantial potential for value addition. Unlocking this potential requires access to appropriate technologies and financing mechanisms — underscoring the importance of improving financial inclusion for forest and farm producers.

Equally important is the social value embedded in FFPOs' cooperative and distributive business models (Pretty et al., 2020). These models promote democratic decision making, shared ownership and equitable benefit distribution. In contexts where formal employment and state support are limited, such structures offer a pathway to inclusive economic participation and community resilience.

However, the benefits of FFPOs are not guaranteed. A breakdown in internal governance can undermine their effectiveness, eroding trust among members, weakening benefit-sharing mechanisms, and deterring external support. In a recent survey of 41 FFPOs across Africa, Latin America and Asia, respondents overwhelmingly identified the need for improved internal governance as a top priority (Covey et al., 2021). Strong governance is essential for reducing organisational risk, attracting financial and technical support, and ensuring long-term sustainability. In a nutshell, while FFPOs hold immense promise in terms of economic value and social equity, realising their full potential depends on robust internal structures and enabling external conditions.

Figure 6. Results of a global knowledge gap survey covering 41 FFPOs



There is a clear need for knowledge on how to maintain and improve aspects of internal governance among FFPOs. Typical causes of organisational failure include a breakdown in trust or belonging, abuses of power and elite capture, or failures to distribute benefits in an equitable manner. For members to be motivated to remain in an organisation, the benefits they enjoy must exceed the costs.

6

Case studies of good internal governance

6.1 Introducing the case studies: internal governance of organisations at different levels







Knowledge coproduction plays a critical role in generating information that is credible, legitimate and relevant for informed decision making (Bandola-Gill et al., 2023). Interest in knowledge coproduction has surged since its inception by Elinor Ostrom and collaborators in the 1970s, with a notable rise in collaborative case studies, especially those involving Indigenous Peoples, in the 21st century (Zurba et al., 2022).

As a partnership that aims to strengthen FFPOs and groups of Indigenous Peoples and local communities as the most significant change agents for delivering climate-resilient landscapes and improved livelihoods, the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) coproduces knowledge with the FFPOs and groups of Indigenous Peoples and local communities it supports. Typically, this involves a series of steps (see Covey et al., 2021):

1. Identifying with FFPOs and groups of Indigenous Peoples and local communities an area of mutual interest: the global knowledge gap survey conducted among 41 FFPOs across the world identified organisational governance as a knowledge gap (see Figure 6).
2. Co-committing to the topic through field discussions of the best organisations and sites from which to learn, using discussions with FFF country facilitators to identify the best cases.
3. A researcher-led literature search to frame the topic (the analysis presented in the earlier sections led to the design of the template for the case studies in this report).
4. Commissioning case studies documented by FFPOs or groups of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (the summaries are presented in the following sections in this chapter).
5. Organising a co-learning event to exchange and integrate findings (a regional meeting was held in Zambia with FFPOs from across the region with a special session on internal governance).
6. Producing initial knowledge products (including the case studies that are already online, but also the GET-SET tool presented in Appendix 2 and this report).
7. Testing any knowledge products or guidance to improve FFPO internal governance (for example, the GET-SET tool was tested with selected FFPOs in Kenya in December 2024).
8. Organising final co-learning events to implement training or refine knowledge products prior to alternative means of dissemination (forthcoming).

The six case studies selected for inclusion here emerged from Step 4 of the process. Each of the summaries are based on the longer case studies referenced in Table 3. The idea was to substantiate theories gleaned from the academic literature about tactics of strengthening internal governance of organisations with some glimpses of how FFPOs and groups of Indigenous Peoples and local communities were actually doing it in practice. Each of the case studies was chosen because FFF facilitators felt that those particular groups had put in place good structures, processes and practices and were using at least some deliberate proactive internal governance tactics from which other FFPOs and groups of Indigenous Peoples and local communities could learn.

Table 3. Summary of the case studies of FFPO tactics to enhance internal governance

#	Country	FFPO name	Description of internal governance	Reference
1	Bolivia 	Association of Organizations of Ecological Producers of Bolivia (AOPEB)	Established in 1991, AOPEB's strong internal governance has united 84 organisations, representing 70,000 organic producers across Bolivia. Its success stems from democratic election procedures that promote trust and participation among its members.	Salomón Vargas (2024)
2	Ghana 	Kokoo Pa Farmers Association	Established in 2009, the Kokoo Pa Farmers Association in Ghana supports 10,300 cocoa farmers, 30% of whom are women. Strong internal governance, including the formation of women's groups, has driven its success in promoting sustainable, UTZ-certified cocoa practices.	Dalinpoo (2024)
3	Nepal 	Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN)	Founded in June 1995, FECOFUN's strong internal governance has empowered 14 million forest users across 22,415 community forestry user groups (CFUGs) in Nepal. Its success stems from inclusive leadership, gender diversity, transparent financial practices and rigorous oversight, ensuring sustainable forest management and economic empowerment.	Ghimire (2024)
4	Tanzania 	Tanzania Forest Community Network (MJUMITA)	Established in 2007, MJUMITA's strong internal governance has enabled it to effectively address forest degradation, promote economic growth and combat social inequality across Tanzania. Its success is driven by a democratically elected governing board, representing communities from six zones, ensuring leadership that reflects and serves its expansive network of over 452 villages.	Ndilanha et al. (2024)
5	Togo 	Togolese Coordination of Farmers' Organisations and Agricultural Producers (CTOP)	Established in July 2001 and based in Lomé, Togo's capital, CTOP's strong internal governance has allowed it to manage and offer services to over 565,000 smallholder farmers, driving its success through democratic leadership, strict oversight and effective advocacy.	Tokpa (2024)
6	Viet Nam 	Binh Minh Agroforestry Cooperative (BMAC)	Established in 2017, BMAC in Yen Bai province, Viet Nam, has grown from 7 to 18 members, partnering with 2,000 households. Its success is driven by innovative governance, including transparent financial management, robust risk strategies and a commitment to continuous learning.	Nguyen (2024)

6.2 Bolivia case study: Association of Organizations of Ecological Producers of Bolivia (AOPEB)

6.2.1 About AOPEB

The Association of Organizations of Ecological Producers of Bolivia (Asociación de Organizaciones de Productores Ecológicos de Bolivia — AOPEB) was established in 1991 and is located in Sipe Sipe town, which is in Cochabamba region, Bolivia. AOPEB operates nationally, supporting grassroots organisations in three geographical areas: the Andean (Altiplano) zone, sub-Andean (Valleys) zone and Eastern zone (Eastern Plains). AOPEB unites and represents 84 organisations including 61 member-based organisations, foundations and a university at the national level. Currently, AOPEB brings together approximately 70,000 organic producers in all nine departments of the country, spanning 77 municipalities. It helps its members to produce and market a wide variety of organic products including organic quinoa, chocolate, almonds and coffee, among others.

Good internal governance has been key to AOPEB's success in supporting its members to produce organically grown products as well as in its advocacy work on environmentally friendly agricultural practices. This case study details innovative tactics in its internal structures, systems and practices leading to increased support and trust from its broad membership. One notable example is AOPEB's attention to democratic election and re-election procedures — with a shortlisting process requiring a vote of confidence from a majority of affiliated members.

6.2.2 Tactics used by AOPEB to improve internal governance

Key structural elements for success

Good governance adds value to organisations. AOPEB has employed several structural tactics to enhance its internal governance, thereby fostering sustainability and accountability within the organisation. Key among these is the establishment of a written constitution that clearly outlines its mission, vision and values, providing a strong foundation for decision making and focus. The association is formally registered, ensuring compliance with legal standards, and has adopted a tiered democratic membership structure that facilitates balanced representation at local, regional and national levels. This inclusive governance is reinforced by a general assembly where both management and the board of directors are accountable to members.

AOPEB also maintains a clear organisational structure with distinct departments for finance, HR, operations, certification and technical services, which support its members. Additionally, the organisation has specialised units for extension, business, logistics, communications, monitoring and evaluation, and advocacy. A digitised financial accounting system, which is publicly audited, strengthens financial transparency, while linkages with financial institutions provide members access to loans and investment support. AOPEB has also established a trading arm to negotiate favourable prices for members' organic products and maintains structured relationships with government authorities and development agencies, further solidifying its governance and operational success.

Key processes for success

Systems and processes are essential for organisational governance, serving as mechanisms to benchmark against best practices and track compliance with standards and targets (McKinsey and Company, 2025). AOPEB has implemented several key processes and systems that have significantly strengthened its internal governance and boosted sustainability efforts. Notable among these initiatives are clear cycles of strategic and business planning with regular progress reviews, as well as the development of a comprehensive policy governing membership rights, responsibilities, fees and withdrawal procedures. AOPEB has also instituted clear guidelines on leadership nominations, vetting processes, election procedures and terms of service. The organisation maintains a regular schedule of meetings, up to and including general assemblies, and has established bylaws that define participation requirements and checks for members. It has institutionalised safeguarding and grievance mechanisms that are well understood and consistently enforced. Decision-making procedures at different levels of the organisation are formalised through written protocols, while financial procedures, management policies and accounting standards — including regular audits — further support its governance framework. For transparency and accountability, AOPEB consistently publishes reports on its activities and financial status, underscoring its commitment to open governance and stakeholder trust.

Further, the organisation has defined protocols for convening extraordinary assemblies, including specific voting thresholds for membership approval.

Additionally, AOPEB's human resources policies provide clear guidance on recruitment, conditions of employment and staff wellbeing. This includes job and consultancy terms of reference, which foster clarity and trust within the organisation. A structured process encourages greater female membership and leadership, while the association's youth policy promotes active participation in leadership roles.

Other governance mechanisms include land-use planning and sustainability standards, as well as norms for participatory approaches that ensure adaptability to evolving needs. AOPEB also provides operational services such as training, certification and administrative support, alongside mechanisms for monitoring production quality and internal processes. To empower its members, AOPEB has established ecological schools, promoting sustainability and innovation among producers. Clear rules also prevent members from departing and subsequently winning business from the organisation.

Key practices for success

Good governance is central to the success of any organisation, and AOPEB has embedded this principle through a series of key practices. At the core is a mutually agreed sustainability purpose, with regular progress assessments to ensure alignment. The organisation embraces proactive leadership that identifies and pre-empts challenges, coupled with robust training and capacity-building initiatives. AOPEB emphasises agroforestry and sustainable forestry as a viable business model, encouraging diversification into agroecology for greater resilience. On-farm tree planting is promoted for crop shading and nursery support, alongside financial compliance, with a chartered accountant overseeing a digital finance system. Regular field visits help maintain member engagement, while non-discrimination policies prioritise equality for women and youth. AOPEB ensures transparent communication on decisions at all levels and safeguards farmer rights, including tenure and tree registration. Advocacy for enabling policies supports sustainable production, and the organisation develops shared or third-party labels to make certification accessible to members. New member organisations undergo thorough checks to meet standards, and staff training is carefully planned to reduce reliance on external consultants. In addition, AOPEB implements strict cost-efficiency measures and is focused on leadership continuity to ensure sustained success.



AOPEB's general manager Ana Guzmán displaying organic products and a Participatory Guarantee System certificate © José René Salomón Vargas

6.3 Ghana case study: Kokoo Pa Farmers Association

6.3.1 About Kokoo Pa

The Kokoo Pa Farmers Association is based in Kwadaso South East in the Kumasi region of Ghana. It was established in 2009 with an initial membership of 352 farmers from the Ahafo Ano North and Ahafo Ano South districts. Over the years, the association has grown significantly, now encompassing 10,300 farmers across the Ashanti, Brong, Ahafo and Western North regions, with women making up 30% of the membership. The association's primary goal is to promote sustainable cocoa-farming practices aligned with UTZ-certified standards. To date, approximately 85% of Kokoo Pa's members have attained UTZ certification.

A key driver of Kokoo Pa's success has been its commitment to strong internal governance. The sections that follow highlight the association's innovative governance structures, processes and practices that have played a pivotal role in its development. One such innovation is the formation of women's groups within the communities, complementing the main Kokoo Pa groups. These women's groups provide a platform for addressing specific concerns, building leadership capacity and empowering women to take on active roles within the association.

6.3.2 Tactics used by Kokoo Pa Farmers Association to improve internal governance

Key structural elements for success

Kokoo Pa has established a robust governance framework that ensures transparency, inclusivity and alignment with its mission. The foundation of Kokoo Pa Farmers Association's governance is its written constitution, which clearly articulates the organisation's mission, vision, values and objectives. This document provides clear direction and fosters member commitment by outlining the fundamental principles that guide the association's operations.

As a formally registered organisation, Kokoo Pa upholds high legal and operational standards. Its management and board of directors report to an inclusive general assembly, the highest decision-making body. This democratic structure is tiered across local, regional and national levels, creating a balanced and representative framework that strengthens members' voices at every level of decision making. Gender balance is ensured through quotas on leadership committees, promoting women's active participation up to the board level.

Kokoo Pa's operational efficiency is supported by a well-defined organogram with dedicated departments for finance, HR, operations and certification. These departments are complemented by units specialising in extension services, business support, logistics, communication, MEL and advocacy. This structure ensures effective management of all organisational operations.

In addition to regular local group meetings, Kokoo Pa organises specialised women's groups to empower female members and amplify their roles within the organisation. Kokoo Pa has also embraced digital technology to enhance financial management through a digitised financial accounting system that is banked and publicly audited. Village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) provide members with access to financial services, promoting economic resilience.

Kokoo Pa maintains strong relationships with government authorities and development agencies, reinforcing its ability to influence policies and secure resources for its members. A unique 'social control' unit ensures effective implementation of decisions made during general assemblies, promoting accountability and compliance across all levels.

These structural elements create an organised, responsive governance framework that enables Kokoo Pa to effectively represent and support its members while advancing sustainable agriculture in Ghana (see Figure 7).

and efficient, bringing external credibility and trust to the association. A chartered accountant manages the financial department, ensuring transparency and compliance. The accounts are audited annually by an external audit firm, and the audit reports are presented to the general assembly for scrutiny.

The human resource policy provides guidance on recruitment, conditions and wellbeing, promoting a supportive and fair work environment. Kokoo Pa has structured processes to encourage women's membership and leadership, as well as a youth policy to foster participation and involvement in leadership roles. One key initiative was the introduction of specialised women's groups within the various communities. These groups provide a platform for women to discuss issues of concern and build their capacity to take on leadership roles. Additionally, a change in the registration criteria allowed spouses to use their partners' cocoa farms for registration, which increased female membership from about 20% to over 30%.

Land-use planning and sustainability standards, along with rules and inspections, ensure that environmental practices are upheld. Clear membership premium prices incentivise loyalty and quality among members. Operational services for training, certification, inputs and administrative support are provided to enhance member capabilities. Production quality and certification standards, along with internal monitoring procedures, ensure that Kokoo Pa maintains high standards in its operations. These key processes collectively contribute to the success and sustainability of Kokoo Pa, ensuring that it remains a strong, inclusive and effective organisation.

Key practices for success

Kokoo Pa has achieved internal governance success through a combination of key practices that ensure sustainability, proactive leadership and member-centric approaches. These practices are designed to foster a strong sense of community, transparency and accountability among its members.

Kokoo Pa's success is founded on its strong, mutually agreed-upon sustainability purpose, which is regularly assessed for progress. This commitment to sustainability is evident in the association's emphasis on agroforestry and sustainable forestry as core business strategies, rather than options of last resort. Kokoo Pa promotes agroforestry and agroecology to diversify beyond cash crops, enhancing resilience among its members. For example, Kokoo Pa encourages on-farm tree planting for shade of their cocoa trees and supports the establishment of tree nurseries, reinforcing both environmental and economic sustainability.

Proactive leadership is another critical element of Kokoo Pa's success. The leadership approach is designed to identify and pre-empt problems before they escalate. This is achieved through regular progress assessments and strategic planning, and its democratic and fair process for selecting leaders as described earlier. This structured approach helps maintain stability and continuity within the organisation.



Good cocoa farming practices employed by members of the Kokoo Pa Farmers Association: Kokoo Pa field extension officers show Kokoo Pa members how to identify cocoa pod disease (left). Photo credit: © Frederick Appiah Amponsah/Kokoo Pa Farmers Association; safe pesticide use (right). Photo credit: © KoKoo Pa Farmers Association.

Training and capacity-development opportunities are clearly defined and regularly provided to members. Kokoo Pa invests in the continuous development of its members through training programmes and coaching for community-level facilitators, enhancing their ability to support and train other members. This approach ensures that members are well equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their roles effectively.

Financial accountability is central to Kokoo Pa's governance, as described earlier. This rigorous financial management process ensures that members are well-informed about the association's activities and the use of their resources.

Kokoo Pa Farmers Association also places a strong emphasis on non-discrimination, with a particular focus on women and youth equality. The association has implemented policies to encourage the participation of women and youth in leadership roles. One key initiative was the introduction of specialised women's groups within the various communities, as described earlier.

Regular field visits are conducted to check in on members, offering guidance and support while ensuring activities align with organisational objectives. Kokoo Pa also ensures strong communication about choices and decisions at all levels, fostering transparency and inclusivity. The association emphasises protecting farmers' rights, tenure and tree registration, advocating for policies that support sustainable production.

By maintaining robust connections with government agencies and fostering leadership at all levels, Kokoo Pa ensures its governance remains adaptive, inclusive and effective. These key practices collectively contribute to the success and sustainability of Kokoo Pa Farmers Association, ensuring that it remains a strong organisation.

6.4 Viet Nam case study: Binh Minh Agroforestry Cooperative (BMAC)

6.4.1 About BMAC

The Binh Minh Agroforestry Cooperative (BMAC), formerly the Lem Village Acacia Growers' Group, is a first-tier collective of smallholder forest owners based in Phu Thinh commune, Yen Binh district in Yen Bai province of Viet Nam. It was established in 2017 with seven members and had grown to 18 members by 2023. The cooperative was formed to assist its members with market linkages and access to finance for value addition.

The cooperative's members own 60 hectares of forest plantation and a Forest Stewardship Council Chain of Custody (FSC-CoC) certified sawmill with a processing capacity of 700m³ per month. BMAC has forged affiliations with more than 2,000 households participating in planting forests to supply raw timber to the cooperative. In total, these households cover a planting area of about 8,000 hectares (an increase of 5,000 hectares from 2022) including 6,000 FSC-certified hectares. Besides this, BMAC has also signed contracts with local farmers to supply high-quality acacia seedlings for planting in 650 hectares across 24 communes and towns in Yen Binh district. These acacia farmers will supply timber to the cooperative once they begin harvesting acacia trees. Over a five-year period (2018–2022), the cooperative has generated significant revenues of 6 billion Vietnamese dong and averaging 1.2 billion Vietnamese dong (US\$53,000) in net profit per year.

6.4.2 Tactics used by BMAC to improve internal governance

Key structural elements for success

BMAC has established a robust governance framework by implementing key structural elements that enhance accountability, transparency and operational efficiency. The primary element is a written constitution that clarifies its mission, vision, values and objectives, providing a shared foundation and purpose. As a formally registered legal entity, BMAC commits to high standards of transparency and accountability, strengthened by an inclusive general assembly where management and the board of directors regularly report. This assembly allows members to participate in decision making, ensuring their voices are represented and the organisation remains responsive to their needs.

A clear organisational structure further supports BMAC's operations, defined through an organogram with dedicated departments for finance, HR, operations and certification. Financial transparency is reinforced by a digitised accounting system that is banked and subject to public audits, enabling real-time tracking and fostering trust among stakeholders.

To support financial sustainability, BMAC maintains connections with financial service providers, facilitating members' access to loans and investments.

BMAC's trading arm ensures fair prices for farmers by negotiating with buyers, and structured relationships with government authorities and development agencies bring added resources, compliance support and impact opportunities. Together, these structural elements create a comprehensive governance foundation that empowers BMAC to fulfil its mission, uphold accountability, and foster trust among members and partners.

Key processes for success

BMAC has built a strong governance framework through inclusive and structured processes that engage all members. A key component is the cooperative's commitment to ongoing consultation, where members provide feedback on the constitution, enhancing shared ownership. Strategic and business planning follow a clear cycle, with regular progress meetings to keep goals aligned. A transparent policy outlines membership rights, responsibilities (such as inspections), withdrawal protocols and fee structures, fostering clarity and accountability. BMAC also has a regular meeting cycle, including a general assembly, ensuring active participation across all levels of the organisation.

Financial governance is another cornerstone of BMAC's success, supported by robust financial procedures, management practices, and regular audits that reinforce transparency. Clear job and consultancy terms of reference promote trust by delineating responsibilities. Sustainability is embedded through land-use planning standards and inspection routines, helping members manage resources responsibly. Additionally, BMAC's operational support services cover training, certification and administrative functions, ensuring members have the resources needed for high-quality production.

To ensure consistent product quality, BMAC enforces strict production and certification standards, monitored through regular internal inspections. This rigorous quality control enables members to meet market demands while maintaining BMAC's reputation. A proactive risk-management plan helps the cooperative anticipate challenges and mitigate risks, supporting resilience and sustainability. These structured processes together build a strong foundation for BMAC's internal governance, supporting its goals and reinforcing trust, transparency and collective success.

Key practices for success

BMAC has solidified its internal governance through a set of strategic practices that align members with a shared sustainability purpose. Regular progress assessments ensure this mission stays central to all initiatives, while proactive leadership identifies and pre-empts potential issues, building resilience within the cooperative. BMAC offers regular training and capacity development, emphasising agroforestry and sustainable forestry as viable, profitable business models, not just alternatives. This vision includes a strong focus on agroforestry and agroecology diversification beyond cash crops, enhancing environmental and economic resilience.

Financial compliance is a cornerstone of BMAC's governance, with a chartered accountant managing a digital finance system for transparent, streamlined financial oversight. Safety and health measures, such as safe pesticide spray training, contribute to member wellbeing, complemented by regular field visits that provide support and ensure adherence to standards. BMAC also strengthens internal cohesion and accountability through regular meetings between executive committees and employees, where members actively contribute to decision-making processes.

Communication is key to BMAC's success, with clear channels at all organisational levels. Shared and third-party certification labels make certification more accessible to members, furthering market reach. For example, BMAC has managed to get FSC certification for its timber, helping its members to gain a premium market. To maintain quality, BMAC conducts visits for new member organisations, ensuring they meet cooperative standards, and serves as a liaison with multiple government agencies to support forest communities. Leveraging social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Viber, BMAC fosters a strong community network. Finally, BMAC allocates funds to local social projects, enhancing its impact and strengthening its role as a community pillar.

6.5 Nepal case study: Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN)

6.5.1 About FECOFUN

The Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN) was established in 1995 and represents the collective voice and rights of community forestry user groups (CFUGs) throughout Nepal. FECOFUN's central office is located in Bhaktapur, Nepal, but its presence extends nationwide. Following the federal restructuring of Nepal, FECOFUN established regional and district offices to ensure an active presence at the federal, provincial, district, local and community levels. It now unites approximately 14 million people across 22,415 CFUGs, involving 2.9 million households in the sustainable management of over 2.3 million hectares of forest. In addition to CFUGs, FECOFUN brings together leasehold forestry groups, religious forestry groups and other community-based forest management organisations, reinforcing its role as a cornerstone in Nepal's forestry governance.

FECOFUN is dedicated to promoting sustainable forest management, strengthening forest governance, and enhancing livelihoods through community-based forestry practices. Its mission focuses on safeguarding the rights of forest users through capacity-building programmes, technical support, economic empowerment and policy advocacy. These efforts empower communities across Nepal to manage their resources effectively and equitably, enabling sustainable development and resilience.

FECOFUN's governance structure is highly inclusive and democratic, with a network spanning 77 districts and 555 local levels across Nepal's seven provinces. Around 15,000 members are elected within FECOFUN's chapters, representing Indigenous Peoples, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and the ultra-poor. FECOFUN also mandates that 50% of its leadership roles, including senior positions, be held by women, ensuring that diverse voices are represented within its leadership. This inclusive approach enables FECOFUN to address a wide range of community needs while empowering local leadership in Nepal's forestry sector.

6.5.2 Tactics used by FECOFUN to improve internal governance

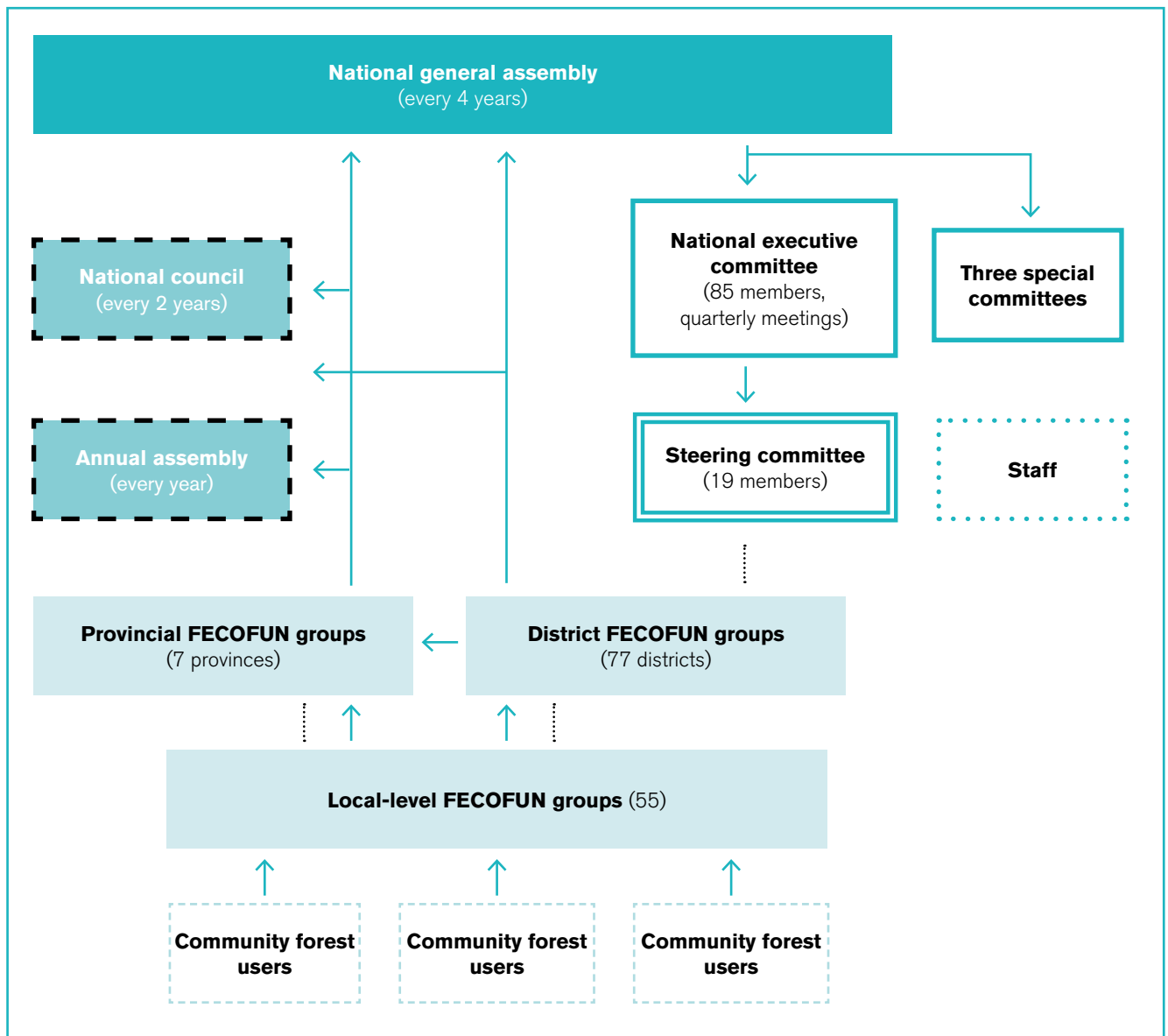
Key structural elements for success

FECOFUN has strengthened its internal governance through several key structural elements that promote accountability, inclusivity and effective representation. At the foundation is a written constitution that sets forth FECOFUN's mission, vision, values and organisational objectives, ensuring a clear, unified direction. Formal registration as a legal entity reinforces this foundation, aligning FECOFUN with legal standards and demonstrating a commitment to transparency and accountability. The organisation's governance is further strengthened by an inclusive general assembly to which both management and the board of directors report, providing a platform for wide participation and collective decision making.

FECOFUN operates with a tiered democratic structure, with balanced membership representation at local, regional and national levels, ensuring that voices from diverse communities are heard (see Figure 8). To promote gender equity, FECOFUN maintains quotas for gender balance across its leadership committees, up to the board level, fostering inclusivity and fair representation in decision making. This structure is supported by a well-defined organisational framework outlined in an organogram, with specialised departments for finance, HR, operations and certification, which clarifies roles and responsibilities for efficient management.

Financial transparency is prioritised through a digitised financial accounting system that is both banked and subject to public audits. Structured relationships with government authorities across various sectors enable FECOFUN to collaborate effectively, while partnerships with development agencies expand resources and support FECOFUN's objectives. These structural elements have collectively enabled FECOFUN to build a resilient governance system that supports its mission, reinforces accountability, and fosters strong community and stakeholder relationships.

Figure 8. FECOFUN's organisational structure



Key processes for success

FECOFUN has established several key processes to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of its governance and operations. Central to its success is a structured approach to consultation and feedback, ensuring that all members have input on the organisation's constitution and policies. FECOFUN follows a clear cycle of strategic planning with regular progress meetings, allowing for continuous adaptation and alignment of goals with its mission. Policies on membership rights, responsibilities and fees, alongside structured bylaws, reinforce transparency and accountability, defining participation standards, inspection requirements and withdrawal processes.

FECOFUN also has comprehensive systems in place for leadership and decision making to foster a democratic and inclusive organisational culture. Nomination, vetting and election processes for leadership are well defined, with clear terms and service periods that ensure stability and enable effective governance. Regular meetings, including general assemblies, facilitate open communication among members, while structured decision-making procedures allow for clarity and trust at all levels. FECOFUN also emphasises social inclusion, with policies specifically designed to support women's participation and leadership, youth involvement, and the representation of ethnic minorities within its governance framework.

To ensure operational effectiveness, FECOFUN has established robust financial and human resource policies, including transparent accounting procedures, regular audits and HR guidelines that address recruitment, employee wellbeing and consultancy terms. Additionally, it prioritises sustainable land-use planning with standards and inspection mechanisms that support ecological integrity in forest management. Training, certification and other support services are provided to empower community members, while an MEL framework enables FECOFUN to assess its impact continuously. Through these processes, FECOFUN maintains its commitment to inclusive, sustainable and community-driven forest governance across Nepal.

Key practices for success

FECOFUN's internal governance is rooted in practices that promote strong leadership, inclusivity and sustainability. Central to its success is a shared commitment to sustainable forestry, which is maintained through regular progress assessments and reflection workshops that allow members to recalibrate goals and celebrate achievements.

FECOFUN champions a proactive leadership style that anticipates challenges, ensuring issues are addressed before they escalate. Regular meetings among executive committees and employees enable FECOFUN to maintain open channels of communication, improve outcomes, and reinforce its focus on sustainable forestry as a viable business opportunity rather than a last-resort option for communities.

Key practices in capacity building and inclusivity further strengthen FECOFUN's internal governance. Comprehensive training and coaching for community facilitators ensure that local leaders are not only informed but also empowered to implement sustainable practices. FECOFUN prioritises non-discrimination, with a strong emphasis on the participation and equality of women and youth. Field visits and check-ins are routine, allowing FECOFUN leaders to monitor members' progress on the ground, understand their challenges, and provide necessary support. Moreover, new member organisations are carefully vetted to ensure they meet established standards, reinforcing accountability within the network.

FECOFUN also excels in financial and advocacy practices, which enhance transparency and policy influence. A chartered accountant oversees financial compliance through a digital finance system, ensuring accountability in fund management. In addition, FECOFUN is vocal in its advocacy for policies that support sustainable forestry, land-tenure security and tree registration, championing farmers' rights in local and national arenas. The organisation employs social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Viber to foster community, engage members and streamline communication. Through these robust practices, FECOFUN ensures that its governance is transparent, responsive and aligned with the needs and aspirations of its diverse membership.



A subcommittee coordinator monitoring a turmeric farm operated by a CFUG (left); members display their finished product (right). Photo credit: © Himalaya Raj Ghimire

6.6 Tanzania case study: Mtandao wa Jamii wa Usimamizi wa Misitu Tanzania (MJUMITA)

6.6.1 About MJUMITA

Mtandao wa Jamii wa Usimamizi wa Misitu Tanzania (MJUMITA — the Tanzania Forest Community Network) is a national FFPO established in 2007 to support sustainable forest management among Tanzanian communities. Headquartered in Msasani ward in the Kinondoni district of the Dar es Salaam region in Tanzania, MJUMITA was formed to address gaps in forest governance by empowering local communities to manage and benefit from forests responsibly. The organisation advocates for fair access to forest resources, fosters accountability and gives communities a united voice in policy discussions.

MJUMITA operates across six geographical zones in Tanzania, representing over 15,000 members from 14 regions and 30 districts, including about 500 community groups and forest-management institutions involved in participatory forest management. By offering training, advocacy tools and resources, MJUMITA strengthens smallholders, who largely farm under five hectares, enabling them to participate effectively in forest management and improve their livelihoods.

In addition to its core focus on local communities, MJUMITA acts as a bridge to other sectors, integrating forest management with broader sustainable development goals. As agriculture shifts toward commercial farming, MJUMITA continues to support rural communities in adapting to these changes while promoting sustainable forestry practices, making it a key advocate for Tanzania's rural poor and forest-dependent populations.

6.6.2 Tactics used by MJUMITA to improve internal governance

Key structural elements for success

MJUMITA's internal governance is rooted in a structured framework that enables accountability, inclusivity and efficiency across its operations. The organisation's written constitution, which outlines its mission, vision, values and objectives, is fundamental to maintaining a clear and unified direction. As a formally registered organisation, MJUMITA adheres to legal standards, reinforcing its commitment to transparency and reliability. The general assembly, which is inclusive of all members, provides a platform for the management team and board of directors to report progress and discuss strategic goals, ensuring accountability and responsiveness to member needs.

The governance structure within MJUMITA is tiered and democratic, with local, regional and national membership structures that allow balanced representation across levels. Gender balance is embedded within MJUMITA's leadership, with quotas in place to ensure women's representation on all leadership committees, including the board. An organogram clearly defines departments for finance, HR, operations and certification, supporting efficient internal functioning and clear roles. This division of responsibilities allows MJUMITA to maintain specialised operational and technical services to meet diverse member needs.

Operationally, MJUMITA is organised into units dedicated to extension services, business development, logistics, communication, monitoring and evaluation, and advocacy, which provide comprehensive support to its members. Its financial accounting system is digitised, banked and publicly audited, which bolsters transparency and public trust. Structured relationships with government authorities and partnerships with development agencies also strengthen MJUMITA's capacity to advocate effectively, mobilise resources, and integrate sustainable forest management with national development priorities.

Key processes for success

MJUMITA has implemented several key processes that have significantly strengthened its internal governance. One of the most critical processes is the structured consultation and feedback mechanism on the constitution by all members. This ensures that the constitution remains relevant and reflective of the members' needs and aspirations. Additionally, MJUMITA follows a clear cycle of strategic or business planning, with regular progress meetings to monitor and adjust plans as necessary. This systematic approach helps keep the organisation on track towards its goals.

Leadership within MJUMITA is carefully managed through defined processes for nomination, vetting, election and terms of service. This ensures that leaders are chosen based on merit and are accountable to the members. Regular cycles of meetings, including those of the general assembly, are held to maintain transparency and open communication. Safeguarding and grievance mechanisms are well-understood and enforced, providing a safe and supportive environment for all members.

Financial integrity is maintained through comprehensive financial procedures, management and accounting policies, including regular audits. MJUMITA is also dedicated to resource mobilisation beyond membership fees, ensuring financial sustainability. Human resource policies provide clear guidance on recruitment, conditions and wellbeing, while structured processes encourage women's membership and leadership. Additionally, land-use planning and sustainability standards are enforced, and a robust MEL plan ensures the effectiveness of MJUMITA's activities.

Key practices for success

MJUMITA's internal governance is highly effective due to its strong, mutually agreed sustainability purpose, which is regularly assessed for progress. This ensures that all members are aligned with the organisation's goals and can track their achievements. Proactive leadership plays a crucial role in identifying and pre-empting potential problems, allowing the organisation to address issues before they escalate. Additionally, clear training and capacity development opportunities help build a skilled and knowledgeable workforce, essential for sustainable forestry practices.

Financial compliance is another cornerstone of MJUMITA's success. By having a chartered accountant manage a digital finance system, the organisation ensures transparency and accountability in its financial dealings. Regular field visits to check in on members help maintain a close connection with the community and ensure that practices are being followed correctly. Non-discrimination policies, with a particular emphasis on women and youth equality, foster an inclusive environment where all members can thrive. Regular meetings between executive committees and employees further enhance communication and decision-making processes.

MJUMITA also places a strong emphasis on protecting farmers' rights, tenure and tree registration, advocating for enabling policies for sustainable production. Acting as a liaison between multiple government agencies, MJUMITA ensures that the interests of forest communities are represented and addressed. Peer-to-peer learning dialogues and strong media engagement, including inviting journalists to AGMs, help amplify key messages and promote the importance of sustainable forestry. These practices collectively contribute to MJUMITA's effective internal governance and its success in sustainable forest management.



MJUMITA members from the Northern Zone attending the 24th Annual General Meeting held in 2024. The event was officiated by the Deputy Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism together with the Director of the Forestry and Beekeeping Division. Photo credit: © MJUMITA.

6.7 Togo case study: Togolese Coordination of Farmers' Organisations and Agricultural Producers (CTOP)

6.7.1 About CTOP

The Togolese Coordination of Farmers' Organisations and Agricultural Producers (Coordination Togolaise des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs Agricoles — CTOP) was founded on 10 July 2001 as a national platform to promote professional, sustainable and competitive agriculture for Togo's family farmers, foresters and fishers. Based in Lomé, CTOP operates nationwide, covering Togo's diverse forest and agricultural areas. The organisation's membership has grown significantly, now encompassing 21 umbrella FFPOs that represent over 565,000 farmers and producers across Togo. This growth highlights CTOP's expanding influence across all agri-food and pastoral sectors, with membership nearly doubling since 2010.

CTOP provides a range of services aimed at strengthening its members' capacities and advocating for their interests. It focuses on leadership development, offering training and coaching, particularly to support women and young farmers. Advocacy is a core activity, with CTOP representing producers' interests at national, sub-regional and international levels, including in global forums. CTOP also provides support in financial and commercial intermediation, helping members create business plans, secure funding and market their products effectively through exhibitions and trade fairs.

In addition to supporting core governance practices within member organisations, CTOP promotes sustainable land management and facilitates the sharing of good practices among its members. CTOP's producer members are engaged in both food and commercial crop production, cultivating and exporting commodities such as coffee, cocoa, cotton and cashew, while also marketing surplus food crops. With farm sizes averaging between 2.7 and 4.6 hectares, CTOP's support helps smallholders navigate market challenges and maintain productive and sustainable agricultural systems.

6.7.2 Tactics used by CTOP to improve internal governance

Key structural elements for success

CTOP's internal governance is anchored in strong structural elements that ensure transparency, inclusivity and alignment with its mission. Its written constitution articulates the organisation's mission, vision, values and objectives, providing clear direction and fostering member commitment. As a formally registered organisation, CTOP upholds high legal and operational standards, and its management and board of directors report to an inclusive general assembly. This democratic structure is tiered across local, regional and national levels, creating a balanced and representative framework that strengthens members' voices at every level of decision making. A commitment to gender balance is evident through gender quotas on leadership committees, ensuring women's active participation up to the board level.

CTOP's operational efficiency is further supported by a well-defined organogram that includes dedicated departments for finance, HR, operations and certification. These departments are complemented by units specialising in extension services, business support, logistics, communication, MEL and advocacy. In addition to regular local group meetings, CTOP organises specialised women's groups that focus on empowering female members and amplifying their roles within the organisation. Structured links with financial service providers and investment partners give members access to credit, while a trading arm and relationships with buyers help secure competitive prices for farmers' products, enhancing their economic resilience.

CTOP distinguishes itself through its strategic engagement with government authorities and development partners, which enhances its capacity to advocate for member interests and secure institutional support. One of its notable innovations is the establishment of a dedicated 'social control' unit — an internal accountability mechanism that monitors the implementation of decisions made during general assemblies. This unit plays a critical role in reinforcing transparency, ensuring that commitments are followed through, and promoting compliance across the organisation. By embedding accountability into its operational structure, CTOP strengthens member trust and institutional credibility, setting a strong foundation for sustained policy influence and resource mobilisation. These structural elements work together to create an organised, responsive governance framework that enables CTOP to effectively represent and support its members while advancing sustainable agriculture in Togo.

Key processes for success

CTOP's internal governance thrives on well-defined and consistent processes that ensure accountability, inclusivity and strategic progress. A clear cycle of strategic and business planning, supported by regular progress meetings, helps the organisation stay aligned with its objectives and adapt to emerging challenges. Membership policies outline rights, responsibilities, withdrawal procedures and fee structures, ensuring clarity and fairness among members. Leadership processes are equally structured, with clear nomination, vetting, election procedures, defined service periods and terms, fostering transparency and trust in governance.

Regular meetings, culminating in the general assembly, provide a forum for decision making and collective input. CTOP operates under a framework of bylaws and standards that define membership participation requirements and enforce compliance through inspections and checks. Safeguarding mechanisms and grievance procedures are well-established, understood and enforced, creating a safe and equitable environment for all members. Written procedures guide decision making at various levels, while robust financial management and auditing policies ensure transparency and accountability in resource use. CTOP also has a comprehensive HR policy that supports recruitment, defines work conditions, and prioritises member and staff wellbeing.

To foster inclusivity and future-focused governance, CTOP has structured processes to encourage the participation of women and youth, including dedicated policies and leadership initiatives. Sustainability is a cornerstone of CTOP's operations, reflected in its land-use planning and sustainability standards, as well as its climate-resilience plan, which guides members' actions to mitigate environmental risks. MEL plans and project evaluations regularly assess the effectiveness of activities, while a structured communication plan ensures information flows effectively across all levels, enabling informed decision making and continuous improvement. These processes collectively underpin CTOP's ability to support its members while promoting sustainable and equitable agricultural practices in Togo.



CTOP's executive board and secretariat meet Togo's Minister of Agriculture in 2023. Photo credit: © CTOP.

Key practices for success

CTOP's internal governance success is underpinned by its commitment to a shared sustainability purpose, proactive leadership and member-centric practices. Regular progress assessments ensure alignment with its sustainability goals, while a proactive leadership approach anticipates and addresses challenges effectively. CTOP emphasises agroforestry and agroecology as core strategies, diversifying beyond cash crops to build resilience among its members. It actively promotes on-farm tree planting for shade and supports the establishment of tree nurseries, reinforcing both environmental and economic sustainability.

Financial accountability is central to CTOP's governance. A chartered accountant oversees a digital financial system to ensure transparency and compliance. The organisation also provides financial support and capacity-building initiatives to member-based groups, enabling them to strengthen their financial management and accounting practices. Regular field visits help maintain close connections with members, offering guidance and support while ensuring activities align with organisational objectives. Additionally, CTOP encourages equal participation by prioritising women and youth inclusion, fostering a culture of non-discrimination within its governance framework.

CTOP invests in leadership and capacity development to sustain its governance excellence. Regular training and coaching programmes are provided for community-level facilitators, alongside a structured leadership development strategy to ensure continuity. CTOP facilitates peer-to-peer learning among members, creating platforms for experience-sharing and collaboration. Advocacy for farmers' rights, tenure, and enabling policies for sustainable production is complemented by strong communication practices, including the use of social media to engage and inform members. By maintaining robust connections with government agencies and fostering leadership at all levels, CTOP ensures its governance remains adaptive, inclusive and effective.

7

Common elements of good internal governance and other governance-improvement tools

Analysis from the six case studies described in Chapter 6 reveals a series of common elements that occur in the majority of well-governed FFPOs. For each case study, the main elements of good governance were tabulated sequentially — with a column for frequency. As subsequent case studies were examined, common governance elements were recorded by increasing the frequency by one. Any governance element that was only recorded in one FFPO was left as a single frequency. The governance elements were then ordered from the highest to lowest frequency of occurrence. The most frequent elements were then transcribed in a way that reflected their formulation in different FFPOs. These common elements relate to different parts of the governance structures, systems and practices that are found in FFPOs that are widely regarded as well managed. In the tables that follow, these elements have been organised into blocks of elements that share some similarity in subject matter. They offer a practical foundation for governance assessment and improvement and serve as a bridge to the [Governance Enhancement Tactics — Self-Evaluation Tool \(GET-SET\)](#) (see also Appendix 2).

7.1 Structural elements

Analysis of the six case studies reveals a set of common structural features that support effective governance in FFPOs. From this review, **20 key structural elements** were identified that were consistently present across most cases. These elements reflect how FFPOs organise roles, ensure representation and maintain accountability across different departments or tiers. The following tables summarise these structural elements, providing a comparative overview of their application and relevance to FFPO governance.

7.1.1 Firm legal foundations, oversight and management

Table 4. Structural elements governing legal foundations, oversight and management

No.	Structural elements	# case study FFPOs out of 6
1.	Formal registration as some form of group organisation and commitment to legal standards	6
2.	Board comprising members drawn from broad spectrum of expertise relevant to operation of organisation	6
3.	Management team with considerable expertise in areas of leadership, finance, records, operations and human resources	6
4.	Founding documents of a written constitution with mission, vision, values and goals that reflect the members' aspirations	6
5.	Member-driven consultative process used in the formulation of those founding documents	4

7.1.2 Inclusive membership and decision-making structures

Table 5. Structural elements that shape membership and decision making

No.	Structural elements	# case study FFPOs out of 6
6.	Inclusive general assembly to which management and the board of directors report	6
7.	Tiered democratic decision-making structures that may be layered into local, regional and national levels	5
8.	Gender balance and quotas on tiered leadership committees in those representative structures, up to and including the board	5
9.	Women's groups that are additional to any other regular group meetings	2

7.1.3 Functional operational departments and support services

Table 6. Structural elements that shape functional operations and related support services

No.	Structural elements	# case study FFPOs out of 6
10.	Written organogram with core departments, for example management, human resources, operations and finance	6
11.	Specialised units, for example for research, certification, logistics, communication, monitoring and learning, and advocacy	4
12.	Division for member services, for example member recruitment, operational and technical services, extension support	4
13.	Office within which organisational records are kept pertaining to decisions, finances, stock and repairs	4

7.1.4 Transparent financial structures and integrity

Table 7: Structural elements that enhance transparency of financial structures and cultivate integrity

No.	Structural elements	# case study FFPOs out of 6
14.	Transparent and digitised financial accounting system that is banked and audited publicly	5
15.	Savings and credit cooperative organisations (SACCO) that provide savings and loans facilities for members (digitised)	1
16.	Links to external financial service providers for loans, investment support	4
17.	Trading arm that negotiates and sells as a group with buyers to ensure best prices for farmers' products	4

7.1.5 Rigorous compliance structures and accountability

Table 8: Structural elements that boost compliance and accountability

No.	Structural elements	# case study FFPOs out of 6
18.	Structured relationships with government authorities from different sectors	5
19.	Compliance unit of 'social control' to ensure decisions implemented after general assembly	2
20.	Structured relationships and partnerships with other development agencies, buyers	5

7.2 Systems and policies

The case studies reveal a wide range of systems and policies that contribute to effective governance in FFPOs. Through comparative analysis, **34 key elements** were identified that were commonly in place across most organisations. These elements include formal procedures, operational guidelines and policy frameworks that support transparency, accountability and inclusive decision making. The following tables provide a summary of these systems and policies, offering insights into how they are applied and adapted across different FFPO contexts.

7.2.1 Formally recorded guiding documents or policies

Table 9: System and policy elements that guide a formal FFPO

No.	Systems and policies	# case study FFPOs out of 6
21.	The organisation has a constitution, bylaws or other documented internal regulations and membership rules	6
22.	The organisation has a written vision, goal or mission statement that is regularly reviewed and revised	6
23.	The organisation has a written strategic/business plan that is updated each year	6
24.	The organisation has a written finance policy, manual and guidelines that are followed	6
25.	The organisation has a written human resources policy, manual and guidelines	5
26.	The organisation has a written anticorruption policy that is actively enforced	1
27.	The organisation has a written gender policy and gender strategy that is visibly enacted	3
28.	The organisation has a written advocacy agenda targeting specific decision makers	2

7.2.2 Inclusive constitutional and strategic processes

Table 10. Systems and policy elements that build inclusive constitutional and strategic processes

No.	Systems and policies	# case study FFPOs out of 6
29.	Process of structured consultation and feedback on the constitution, bylaws or other internal regulations by all members	4
30.	Clear cycle of strategic or business planning with regular progress meetings	6
31.	Actively maintained policy on membership rights, withdrawal, responsibilities (inspections) and fees to ensure loyalty	5
32.	Regular cycle of meetings, including general assembly and extraordinary assemblies, and management meetings	6
33.	Participatory approach to the development of policy, norms and standard-setting for adaptability	2

7.2.3 Clearly defined leadership terms and decision-making processes

Table 11. System and policy elements that guide leadership and decision-making processes

No.	Systems and policies	# case study FFPOs out of 6
34.	Leadership nomination, vetting, election, terms and service periods defined	5
35.	Written procedures for decision making at different levels to avoid conflicts	5
36.	Structured process for encouraging women's membership, leadership and participation in decision making	5
37.	Youth policy to encourage participation and involvement of youth in leadership	4
38.	Deliberate policy for the social inclusion of ethnic minorities or other vulnerable groups	1
39.	Leadership accountability and transparency are maintained through regular and transparent reporting (including of finances)	1

7.2.4 Integrated operational and financial management systems

Table 12. System and policy elements that enhance operational and financial management systems

No.	Systems and policies	# case study FFPOs out of 6
40.	Financial procedures, management and accounting policies in place, including audits	6
41.	Published reports of activities and finances for transparency and accountability	1
42.	Commitment to resource mobilisation beyond membership fees including through sale of products and services	1
43.	Human resource policy with guidance on recruitment, conditions and wellbeing	5
44.	Clear job and consultancy terms of reference for non-staff employment for clarity and trust	4
45.	Operational services for training, certification, inputs and administrative support	4
46.	Production quality and certification standards with internal monitoring procedures	3

7.2.5 Structured land-use planning and resilience policies

Table 13. Systems and policy elements that guide land-use planning and enhance resilience

No.	Systems and policies	# case study FFPOs out of 6
47.	Land-use planning, sustainability standards, rules and inspections are in place	1
48.	Ecological schools/training courses have been set up to promote long-term sustainability and climate resilience of producers	1
49.	Climate-resilience plans have been developed to assess vulnerabilities and guide member actions	1
50.	Risk-management plan in place to mitigate potential challenges with a regular cycle of risk self-assessment	1
51.	Monitoring and evaluation plan or regular project evaluations to assess effectiveness of activities	3

7.2.6 Clear grievance, accountability and communication systems

Table 14. Systems and policies that support grievance handling, accountability and internal communication

No.	Systems and policies	# case study FFPOs out of 6
52.	Safeguarding and grievance mechanism procedures are understood and enforced	5
53.	Procedures for preventing members from leaving and competing against the organisation	1
54.	Clear communication plan to keep members and stakeholders informed	1
55.	Procedures for extraordinary assemblies as required by membership vote	2

7.3 Practices

7.3.1 Integral sustainability and agroecological practices

Table 15. Practices that support sustainability and promote agroecological approaches

No.	Common practices	# case study FFPOs out of 6
56.	Strong, mutually agreed sustainability purpose with regular progress assessments	6
57.	Promoting agroforestry and agroecology diversification beyond cash crops for resilience	4
58.	Emphasis on agroforestry and sustainable forestry as a business, not a last resort	6
59.	Encouraging on-farm tree planting for shade and supporting tree nurseries	3
60.	Developing shared or third-party labels to make claims on sustainability, equity or origin accessible for members	2
61.	Financial support to member-based groups to improve their internal finance and accounting	1

7.3.2 Proactive leadership and capacity-building practices

Table 16. Practices that foster proactive leadership and build capacity of members

No.	Common practices	# case study FFPOs out of 6
62.	Proactive leadership that listens to members, identifies and pre-empts potential problems	6
63.	Developing a leadership continuity strategy and staff training to reduce dependence on consultants	2
64.	Clear training and capacity-development opportunities for members and staff	6
65.	Coaching for community-level facilitators, not just training, to ensure longer-term uptake	4

7.3.3 Practical operational and financial integrity practices

Table 17. Practices that enhance operational and financial integrity

No.	Common practices	# case study FFPOs out of 6
66.	Digital weighing of crops (such as cocoa) when buying from members for transparency	1
67.	Financial compliance, including a chartered accountant managing the digital finance system	6
68.	Regular field visits to monitor and check on members' progress and financial situation	6
69.	Strong attention to communication about choices and decisions at all levels	6
70.	Strict processes for assessing and reducing staff costs for efficiency purposes	1

7.3.4 Inclusive governance and membership practices

Table 18. Practices that promote inclusive governance and strengthen member engagement

No.	Common practices	# case study FFPOs out of 6
71.	Non-discrimination with emphasis on women and youth equality	5
72.	Regular meetings between executive committees and employees to improve outcomes	5
73.	Prioritising consensus-based decision making with voting as a last resort	1
74.	Regular reflection workshops and social gatherings to reassess objectives and progress	1
75.	Funds for local social projects (such as roads, cultural houses, COVID support)	1

7.3.5 Committed advocacy and engagement practices

Table 19. Practices that support committed advocacy and stakeholder engagement

No.	Common practices	# case study FFPOs out of 6
76.	Strong advocacy for enabling policies for sustainable production of different crops, trees and livestock	4
77.	Emphasis on protecting farmers' rights, tenure and tree registration in dialogue with authorities	5
78.	Strong media engagement and peer-to-peer learning dialogues between members	1
79.	Acting as liaison between multiple government agencies affecting forest communities	3
80.	Use of social media (such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber) to build community and share key messages	3
81.	Cooperation with other organisations sharing common agendas to pursue mutual goals	3

7.4 A summary of other existing tools and approaches to assess internal governance

To identify tools relevant for assessing internal governance in FFPOs, a targeted literature review across academic, grey and practitioner sources was conducted. This included keyword searches and exploration of curated databases, such as the **Organisational Capacity Tool Database** developed by Informing Change (2017) in partnership with the Hewlett Foundation.

Rather than relying on a single source, tools cited in peer-reviewed and practitioner literature were cross-referenced to ensure broader coverage and contextual relevance. The tools reviewed vary in scope and application — from self-assessment instruments to externally facilitated evaluations — and address governance dimensions such as leadership, transparency, accountability and participation.

A summary of selected tools is provided in Appendix 1, highlighting their focus areas, intended users, and relevance to FFPOs.

8

Internal governance structures, systems and practices of successful FFPOs: main lessons

Effective governance is a cornerstone of successful and sustainable FFPOs. It influences how decisions are made, how resources are managed, and how members engage with and benefit from their organisations. This report has drawn on six case studies to distil practical lessons that can inform governance improvements across FFPOs operating at different tiers (local, intermediary and national). The lessons are organised under three main governance areas: structure, processes and practices.

8.1 Main lessons about internal governance structures

- **Written constitution:** Successful FFPOs have a clear written constitution that outlines their mission, vision, values and objectives. This foundational document ensures that all members understand and align with the organisation's goals and principles.
- **Formal registration:** Being formally registered as a group organisation and adhering to legal standards is crucial. This formal status enhances legitimacy, accountability and access to resources and support from external entities.
- **Inclusive general assembly:** An inclusive general assembly where management and the board of directors report to members is essential. This structure promotes transparency, accountability and member engagement in decision-making processes.
- **Tiered democratic membership structures:** Implementing tiered democratic membership structures at local, regional and national levels ensures balanced representation and participation. This approach helps in addressing the diverse needs and interests of members across different regions.
- **Gender balance and quotas:** Ensuring gender balance and implementing quotas on leadership committees up to the board level fosters inclusivity and diversity. This practice promotes equal opportunities and representation for all members.

- **Organisational structure:** A well-defined organisational structure with departments for finance, human resources, operations and certification is vital. This clarity in roles and responsibilities enhances efficiency and effectiveness in managing the organisation's activities.
- **Operational and technical services:** Dividing operational and technical services to support members is crucial. Specialised units for extension, business, logistics, communication, MEL and advocacy provide comprehensive support to members.
- **Women's groups:** Establishing women's groups in addition to regular local group meetings ensures that gender-specific issues are addressed. This practice promotes inclusivity and empowers women within the organisation.
- **Digitised financial systems:** Implementing a digitised financial accounting system that is banked and publicly audited enhances transparency and trust. This system ensures accurate financial management and accountability.
- **Structured relationships:** Maintaining structured relationships with government authorities, financial service providers, development agencies and buyers is essential. These relationships provide access to loans and investment support, and ensure the best prices for farmers' products. Additionally, a unit of 'social control' ensures that decisions made during general assemblies are implemented effectively.

8.2 Main lessons about internal governance systems

- **Structured consultation and feedback on constitution by all members:** Successful FFPOs engage all members in drafting and reviewing the constitution to ensure everyone's voice is heard and considered.
- **Clear cycle of strategic or business planning with regular progress meetings:** Successful FFPOs set clear goals and regularly review progress to stay on track and make necessary adjustments.
- **Policy on membership rights, withdrawal, responsibilities (inspections) and fees:** For success, FFPOs need to clearly define what members can expect, their responsibilities and the process for joining or leaving, including fees.
- **Leadership nomination, vetting, election, terms and service periods defined:** Successful FFPOs establish clear rules for choosing leaders, including how long they serve and the process for their election and vetting.
- **Regular cycle of meetings up to and including general assembly:** Successful FFPOs hold regular meetings to discuss and decide on important matters, ensuring all members are involved.
- **Bylaws and standards that define requirements of membership participation and checks:** Successful FFPOs set clear rules for member participation and checks to ensure everyone follows the guidelines.
- **Safeguarding, grievance mechanism and procedures that are understood by all and enforced:** Successful FFPOs have clear procedures for handling complaints and safeguarding members, and make sure everyone knows and follows them.
- **Written procedures for decision making at different levels:** Successful FFPOs document how decisions are made at all levels to ensure transparency and consistency.
- **Financial procedures, management and accounting policies in place including audits:** Successful FFPOs implement clear financial policies and conduct regular audits to ensure transparency and accountability.
- **Dedicated commitment to resource mobilisation for the organisation beyond membership fees:** Successful FFPOs seek additional funding sources beyond membership fees to support the organisation's activities and growth.

8.3 Main lessons about internal governance practices

- **Strong mutually agreed sustainability purpose with progress assessments:** Successful FFPOs ensure all members agree on sustainability goals and regularly assess progress to stay aligned.
- **Proactive leadership approach which identifies and pre-empts problems:** Successful FFPOs have leaders that actively identify potential issues and address them before they escalate.
- **Clear training and capacity-development opportunities:** Successful FFPOs provide ongoing training and development to enhance members' skills and capabilities.
- **Emphasis on agroforestry and sustainable forestry as a business:** Successful FFPOs promote agroforestry and sustainable forestry as viable business models, not just fallback options.
- **Promoting agroforestry and agroecology diversification beyond cash crops for resilience:** Successful FFPOs encourage diversification into agroforestry and agroecology to build resilience beyond cash crops.
- **Encouraging on-farm tree planting as shade for crops, support for tree nurseries:** Successful FFPOs support on-farm tree planting to provide shade for crops and establish tree nurseries.
- **Digital weighing of crops (such as cocoa) to ensure transparency:** Successful FFPOs use digital weighing systems for crops to ensure transparency and accuracy.
- **Financial compliance including chartered accountant managing digital finance system:** Successful FFPOs ensure financial compliance with a chartered accountant overseeing a digital finance system.
- **Financial support to member-based groups to improve their financial accounting:** Successful FFPOs provide financial support to help member groups to improve their accounting practices.
- **Safe pesticide spray training and other health measures:** Successful FFPOs offer training on safe pesticide use and other health measures to protect members' wellbeing.

9

Recommendations to FFPOs for supporting better internal governance

Strengthening internal governance is essential for the resilience and effectiveness of FFPOs. Rather than offering a static list of best practices, a **structured, participatory review process is recommended** that allows each organisation to assess and improve its governance in context.

The Governance Enhancement Tactics — Self Evaluation Tool (GET-SET) (see Appendix 2), developed by IIED and FFF, provides a practical framework for FFPOs to achieve this. It draws on governance elements observed across six well-managed FFPOs, grouped into thematic blocks to support reflection and prioritisation. The approach used for the GET-SET tool is to convene a participatory discussion (involving representatives of all parts of an FFPO) in four logically sequential steps:

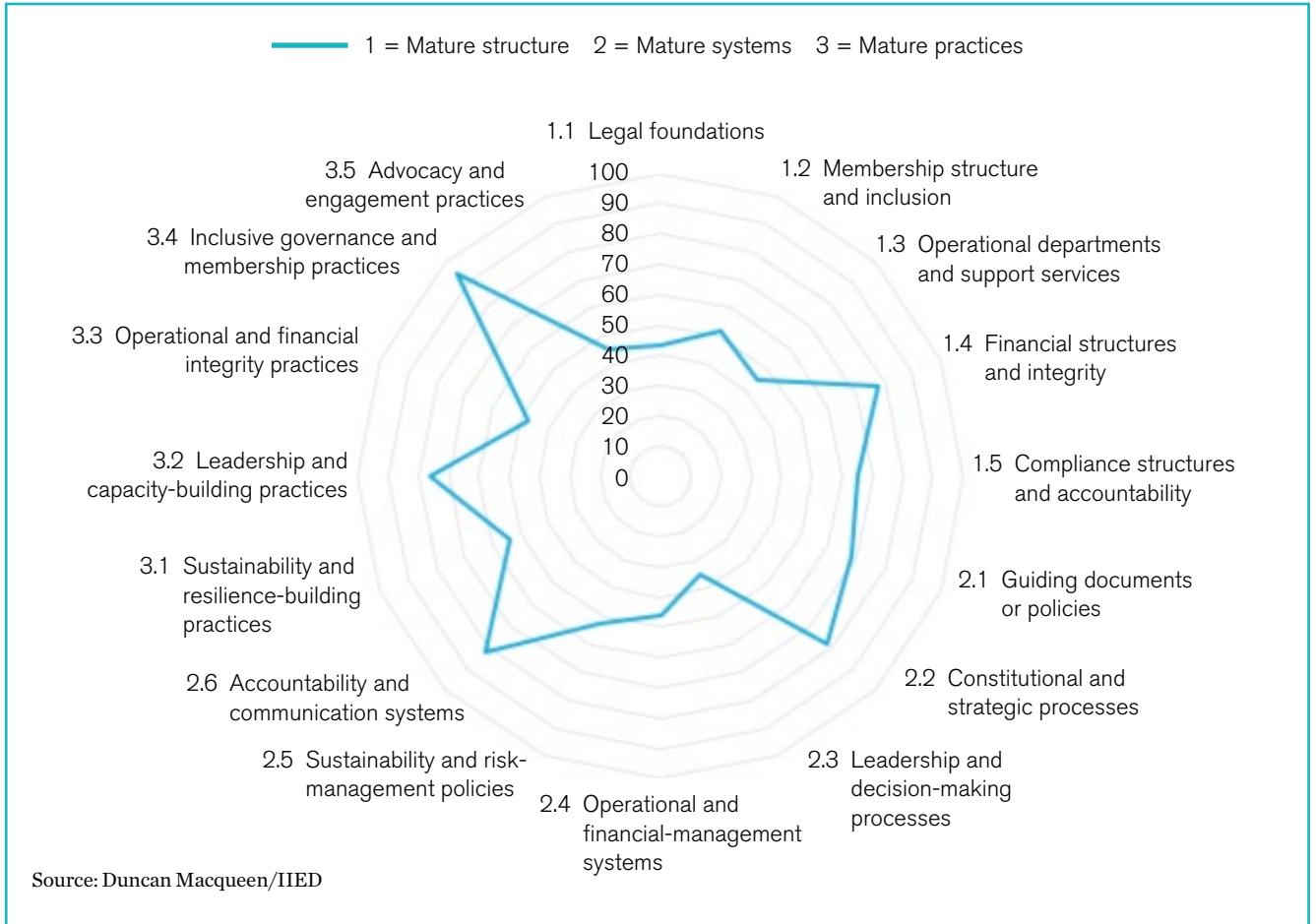
- **Step 1. Preparation:** Establishing who will be involved and who will be responsible for keeping records of the process.
- **Step 2. Self-reflective organisational ‘health check’:** Discussing varied perceptions of how well the organisation is functioning and relationships within it.
- **Step 3. Systematic inventory and scoring:** Agreeing what useful structures, systems and practices the organisation might or might not have in place.
- **Step 4. Designing an internal governance improvement plan:** Identifying, prioritising and assigning responsibility for strengthening any areas of weakness.

This approach encourages inclusive participation — especially of women, youth and marginalised groups — and supports transparency, autonomy and long-term sustainability. Organisations interested in strengthening their governance are encouraged to use the GET-SET tool as a starting point. It provides a structured yet flexible pathway for reflection, learning and action.

It is recommended that FFPOs adopt the GET-SET tool not only to guide internal governance improvement planning but also to assess organisational maturity. For Step 3 (systematic inventory and scoring) each of the three main areas of internal governance are broken down into 5–6 constituent elements as shown in Figure 9, with 16 elements in total.

For each element, the tool proposes a set of indicators of ‘what well-governed FFPOs usually put in place’ for that element, scored using a system of 0 (not present), 1 (under development) or 2 (fully in place). The combined score for each element can then be converted into a spider diagram of percentage scores based on the actual versus possible score for indicators in each element, with a total of 80 indicators making up the full dataset. This maturity scoring process — piloted in Kenya and now expanding to other FFF countries — allows FFPOs to track growth over time, visualise progress through spider diagrams, and inform strategic decisions, including potential exit strategies for donors such as FFF.

Figure 9. Maturity assessment for FFPOs using the GET-SET approach



Appendix 1. Summary of organisational capacity assessment tools

The literature review identified several organisational capacity assessment (OCA) tools that were cited more frequently than others. Table 20 presents a summary of these tools.

Table 20. A summary of the most commonly used organisational capacity assessment tools

#	Creator	Tool Name	Link	Main focus
1	McKinsey and Company	Organizational capacity assessment tool (OCAT)	https://mckinseysociety.com/ocat/	Seven organisational capacity areas and their elements (aspirations, strategy, organisational skills, human resources, systems and infrastructure, organisational structure, and culture)
2	Marguerite Casey Foundation	Organisational capacity assessment tool*	Marguerite Casey Foundation Assessment Tool	Four organisational capacity areas (leadership, adaptive management and operational capacity)
3	Social Venture Partners	Organisational capacity assessment tool	Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool (Version 1) - Social Venture Partners International	Ten organisational capacity areas (mission, vision, strategy and planning; programme design and evaluation; human resources; senior management team leadership; information technology; financial management; fund development; board leadership; legal affairs; marketing, communication and external relations)
4	Pact	Organisational capacity assessment	Pact's Organisational Capacity Assessment handbook Pact (pactworld.org)	Six capacity areas (strategic organisation, stakeholders, human resources, assets and offices, administration and finance, core values)
5	Venture Philanthropy Partners	McKinsey capacity assessment grid	Nonprofit-21.qxd (uconn.edu)	Same as # 1 above

Some of the publicly available Organisational Capacity Assessment Tools (OCAT) were examined during the review of literature. Below is a summary of the tools:

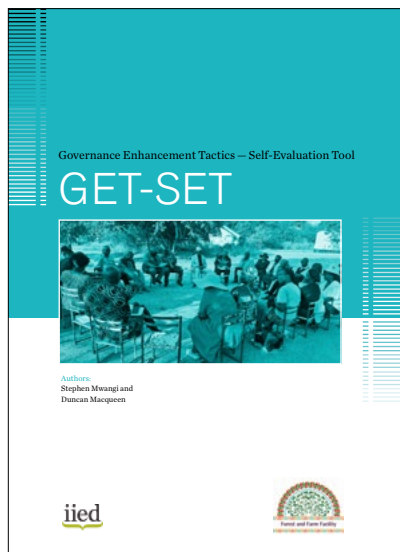
Table 21. A summary of other publicly available organisational capacity assessment tools

Tool name	Link
Organisational Capacity Internal-Assessment Tool	https://www.calpnetwork.org/publication/organizational-capacity-assessment-tool-ocat-user-guide/ https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/calp-ocat-worksheets-jan-2016.xlsx
Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA)	https://www.fhi360.org/wp-content/uploads/drupal/documents/Organisational_Capacity_Assessment.pdf
Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT)	https://msh.org/resources/organizational-capacity-assessment-tool-ocat/
Simple Capacity Assessment Tool (SCAT)	https://www.gdrc.org/ngo/bl-scat.htm
Impact Capacity Assessment Tool (iCAT)	https://algorithm.io/icat/ https://www.oneoc.org/organizational-assessment-tool
Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT)	https://www.freedomfund.org/resources/partner-hub/ocat/
Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool	https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/ea110a43-f123-4e51-97c6-42a4af2914cf/resource/24420616-9a41-4d14-ba27-9309e19125c7/download/cmswcp-organizational-capacity-assessment-tool.docx (downloads PDF)
Nonprofit Organisational Assessment	https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SVF38MM?sm=nqYAflt d5pCME8J7VJJBQpxt%2b7TXVQBxdZt6z7liPZg%3d
Organizational Mapping Tool (OMT)	https://www.fordfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/english-omt__v5-february-2023-1.pdf
Organizational Mapping Tool for Coalitions, Alliances and Networks (OMT-CAN)	https://www.fordfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/OMT-CAN_English_2023-V.2.pdf
Capacity Assessment Tool (CAT)	https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/waggggs.prod/documents/ENG_Capacity_Assessment_Tool.pdf
Program Sustainability Assessment Tool	https://sustaintool.org/
Organizational Development Assessment (ODA)	https://hrh2030program.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CBM-guide-annex-F-oda.pdf
Civil Society Accountability: Principles and Practice, India Toolkit	http://commonwealthfoundation.com/resource/civil-society-accountability-toolkit-india/
The Institutional Strengthening Standards for Kenyan Civil Society Organisations	https://msh.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/final-is-standards-for-kenyan-csos_feb2014_red.pdf
Organisational Development Assessment Guide	https://www.bridgespan.org/getmedia/5bd1f2e4-ca88-4f88-9fe9-ba4d4c852305/organisational-development-assessment-guide.pdf

Tool name	Link
Organisation Capacity Self-Assessment	https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Template%20_Organisational%20Capacity%20Assessment%20%28OCA%29%20Nov21.docx
Organisational Capacity Assessment	https://scalingcommunityofpractice.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/OCAWithoutFacilitatorsGuideWithoutNUPAS8.4.2014.pdf
A Nonprofit Capacity Self-Assessment Workbook for Rural Community-Based Housing Organisations	https://ruralhome.org/wp-content/uploads/storage/documents/selfassessment.pdf
Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool: Participant's Copy	http://www.jsi.com/JSIInternet/Inc/Common/_download_pub.cfm?id=15691andlid=3
The Performance Imperative 2.0	https://cooperfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2020-01-NPN-Performance-Imperative-Website-Slides.pdf
Institutional Self-Assessment	https://www.cbd.int/doc/pa/tools/Institutional%20self-assessment%20tool%20for%20strengthening%20nonprofits.pdf
Organisational Self-Assessment and Continuous Improvement Tool	https://nds.org.au/images/resources/employment/NDS-Organisational-Self-Assessment-and-Continuous-Improvement-Plan_full.pdf
Enhancing Organizational Performance: A Toolbox For Self-Assessment	https://lib.icimod.org/records/mz10z-et910
Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool	https://www.americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/09102021_OrganizationalCapacityAssessmentTool-508_ORE.pdf
Organisational Assessment Tool (OAT)	https://search.issuelab.org/resource/ngo-manager-organisational-assessment-tool-oat.html
Principles and Practices for Nonprofit Excellence in Michigan: Organisational Assessment and Planning Tool	https://www.heartofthelakes.org/uploads/1/9/3/9/19394581/principles_and_practices_guide.pdf
Guidelines and Principles Tools	http://guidelinesandprinciples.org/assessment/
Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI)	http://www.ocai-online.com
My Healthy Organization	https://myhealthyorganisation.roadmapconsulting.org/assessment-process-mho/
Our Healthy Alliance	https://ourhealthyalliance.roadmapconsulting.org/what-is-an-alliance-assessment-oha/
Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT)	https://myanmar.actionaid.org/sites/myanmar/files/publications/Capacity%20assessment%20tool.pdf
Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool	https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59bc3457ccc5c5890fe7cacd/t/669ea71efa5587294af29f64/1721673502687/DSQ_OCAT.pdf
Nonprofit Organizational Assessment Tool	https://portailqualite.acodev.be/fr/system/files/node/196/non_profit_organisation_assessment_tool.pdf
Core Capacity Assessment Tool (CCAT)	http://www.tcccat.com/about-the-ccat#whatsIncluded

Tool name	Link
CSO Management: Practical tools for organizational development analysis	https://www.stgm.org.tr/sites/default/files/2020-09/cso-management.pdf
Organisational Approach to Partner Capacity-Building	https://aidlink.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Aidlink-Capacity-Building-Approach-2016.pdf
Nonprofit Organizational Assessment Tool	https://coco-net.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Nonprofit-Organizational-Assessment-Tool.pdf
NZ Navigator	https://nznavigator.org.nz/
Capacity self-assessment	https://res.cloudinary.com/tearfund/image/fetch/https://learn.tearfund.org/-/media/learn/resources/series/roots/casa-e--full-document-en.pdf
CBO Capacity analysis toolkit	https://frontlineaids.org/wp-content/uploads/old_site/114-CBO-capacity-analysis_original.pdf?1406293445
Grantee Survey (part of the Learning and Assessment Framework)	https://weingartfnd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Sample_Grantee_Survey.pdf
Nonprofit Effectiveness Survey	http://nonprofitpathways.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/WNCNPPEffectivenessSurvey10151.pdf
Nonprofit Organizational Assessment	https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SVF38MM?sm=nqYAflt d5pCME8J7VjBQpxt%2b7TXVQBxdZt6z7liPZg%3d
Nonprofit Organizational Assessment Tool	https://portailqualite.acodev.be/fr/system/files/node/196/non_profit_organisation_assessment_tool.pdf
Organizational Capacity and Viability Assessment Tool (OCVAT)	https://pedaids.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Organizational-and-Capacity-Viability-Assessment-Tool-and-Implementation-Guide.pdf
Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) (Version 1)	https://www.socialventurepartners.org/svp_resources/organizational-capacity-assessment-tool-version-1/
Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool	https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59bc3457ccc5c5890fe7cacd/t/669ea71efa5587294af29f64/1721673502687/DSQ_OCAT.pdf

Appendix 2. Governance Enhancement Tactics — Self Evaluation Tool (GET-SET)



Drawing on the six case studies in Chapter 6 and a review of relevant literature, a new organisational capacity-assessment tool, **Governance Enhancement Tactics — Self Evaluation Tool (GET-SET)**, was developed. The tool is available at: www.iied.org/22653iied

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LOCCOG and Nyandarua Tree Growers Marketing Cooperative Society members during GET-SET field testing in Kenya, December 2024. Photo credit: Stephen Mwangi/IIED.



Members of Itsoseng FFPO in Kachikau, Chobe district in Botswana in May 2025 during a self-reflection on internal governance using the GET-SET tool. Photo credit: Stephen Mwangi/IIED.



Field testing the GET-SET tool with Western Tree Growers Rural SACCO Ltd, Webuye, Kenya, December 2024. Photo credit: Stephen Mwangi/IIED.



Ngong Road CFA go through the draft GET-SET tool in Nairobi, Kenya, December 2024. Photo credit: Stephen Mwangi/IIED.



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Research Report

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Forests; Governance

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Strong internal governance is essential for the success and sustainability of forest and farm producer organisations (FFPOs). FFPOs play a vital role in delivering climate-resilient livelihoods, sustainable natural resource management, and inclusive development in forest and farm landscapes. Yet without strong internal governance, FFPOs risk losing member trust, facing operational inefficiencies and failing to achieve their goals. This report explores what good internal governance looks like in practice and how it can be strengthened. It draws on a review of relevant literature and six in-depth case studies of well-governed FFPOs from Bolivia, Ghana, Nepal, Tanzania, Togo and Viet Nam.

IIED is an international policy and research organisation working with partners globally to build a fairer, more sustainable world. Together, we challenge the destructive economic models, unjust power dynamics, entrenched mindsets and protectionist laws that perpetuate poverty, suppress rights and hinder progress towards a thriving world. We explore solutions to complex economic, social and environmental crises, using research, action and influencing to tackle the root causes of climate change, nature loss and inequality.



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The Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) is a partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and the European Agri-agencies (Agricord). FFF strengthens the organisations of Indigenous Peoples, forest communities and family smallholders to secure their rights, organise their businesses, sustainably manage their forests, and provide social and cultural services to the poor and marginalised.



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