GO-REDD+

WHERE SHOULD ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORTS FOCUS IN THE FOREST SECTOR?

Achieving transparent and accountable national REDD+ systems needs a good understanding of the existing forest governance context, including corruption and how to counter it. While governance and anti-corruption challenges in REDD+ will not be the same as those related to illegal logging, useful lessons can be drawn. Yet a number of questions arise: Are preventive or corrective actions most needed? What is the role of law enforcement and how to address the shortcomings of the criminal justice system in the forest sector? Is it more effective to tackle small operations or large scale activities? Two recent papers examine these issues.

Preventive and corrective actions to address illegal logging, and their relationship to corruption, are discussed in "Justice for Forests - Improving criminal justice efforts to combat illegal logging".

The authors emphasize the need for an enhanced role of the criminal justice system, as preventive actions alone do not achieve results. That the criminal justice system in the forest sector is often ineffective should not guide policies but rather be an argument to strengthen them.

The authors also advocate that law enforcement should de-emphasize targeting low-level criminals – which would be dealt with more effectively with prevention and poverty alleviation. Instead, it should focus on large-scale illegal logging operation that requires "responsible" parties in high places to turn a blind eye. The authors call for targeting high-level corruption and the companies that pay bribes, through an integrated criminal justice strategy with systematic investigations, prosecution, and confiscation of the proceeds of the crime.

Targeting the "big fish", which also leads to more media attention, does indeed provide to the confidence of the general public that action is being taken; however addressing "small fish" should not be dismissed, as it supports countering a general feeling of impunity.

Law enforcement is also the focus of a working paper by CIFOR and UNDOC. The authors examine "lessons for REDD+ from measures to control illegal logging in Indonesia". They focus on the *process* as well as the *outcomes* – such as the impact on illegal logging itself and the underlying governance framework – of both law enforcement and trade-related measures such as the FLEGT- VPA. Recommendations include the needs to: define a clearer role for enforcement agencies, penalties and sanctions and increased interaction between these and forestry agencies; encourage law enforcement to look beyond administrative aspects and investigate violations, corruption and negative impacts of legal concession activities; and extend use related instruments such as the national anti-corruption and anti-money laundering laws, to reach the financial backers and corrupt officials who turn a blind eye.

The authors see a strong role of civil society in monitoring and public oversight mechanisms to strengthen the credibility of REDD+ processes. This notion is echoed in a paper by U4/ the Anti-Corruption Centre that touches on how REDD+ can be a positive force for forest governance change.

Countering corruption risks in the forest sector will not end all risks in REDD+. Risks in the design of the REDD+ strategies, where powerful actors seek to "capture" policies related to land use or benefit distribution through corrupt means, as well as risks in the management of central REDD+ financial systems, to name a few, exist as well and will need to be tackled early on during the readiness phase.

The three publications all argue one way or another that law enforcement should not be "shunted" in a corner but rather be part of an integrated system. This system can be supported by corruption-preventive action through information, education and the effective involvement civil society groups. The opportunities in participatory planning and implementation of REDD+, initiated across the Asia-Pacific region, lay solid foundations for these efforts