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STRATEGIES AND TOOLS FOR CONFRONTING CONSERVATION-RELATED CORRUPTION IN AFRICA

The Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group (ABCG) held a [13 January 2005 meeting](#) to: 1) discuss different categories and forms of conservation and natural resource-related corruption; 2) describe the impacts of corruption on conservation efforts and natural resource management; 3) [learn about strategies, tools, and examples of efforts to reduce conservation-related corruption](#); and 4) identify areas for possible field level collaboration to tackle conservation-related corruption with partners in Africa.

Presenters highlighted strategies and tools developed by the [Forest Integrity Network](#), [The President's Initiative Against Illegal Logging](#), and a case study by Innovative Resources Management on [fighting petty corruption in the Democratic Republic of Congo](#). The roundtable discussion focused on presenting examples of successful anticorruption tools. To view the presentations, reference list and key weblinks, see: www.abcg.org; or go directly to: http://www.frameweb.org/ev.php?ID=10477_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC

KEY ISSUES

Corruption, the misuse of entrusted power for private gain, is negatively affecting conservation in Africa. Natural resource-related corruption is a problem because the rule of law is compromised. Illegal logging and wildlife trade destroys forest ecosystems. Money is often diverted from the natural resource sector, and governments and local people are deprived of important revenue. Illegal logging, for example, has financed conflicts in certain countries. The biggest losers are those who won't or can't pay to play: the environment, honest businesses, the poor and future generations. The World Bank estimates that illegal logging results in annual losses of \$10-\$15 billion in developing countries. One of the reasons for creating the U.S. Forest Service in 1905 was to control forest-related corruption.

Conservation-related corruption includes fraud, bribery, favoritism and patronage, and kickbacks, according to the [Forest Integrity Network \(FIN\)](#) who apply the anti-corruption principles identified by [Transparency International](#) to address forest-related corruption.

Corruption can be categorized by: *Who is abusing authority?* (e.g. A forest minister diverts concession income into campaign treasury; a forest officer demands bribe to issue timber transit permit; a forest company awards subcontract for kickbacks). *Legality of associated actions* (e.g. A forest officer is bribed to drop a false charge or to mark extra trees for harvest). *Size: Overarching Corruption* (e.g. A corporation bribes parliament to reshape forest laws to their advantage); **Grand Corruption** (e.g. A head of state awards a major forest concession to his brother's firm); or **Petty Corruption** (e.g. A forest guard extracts a bribe). *Motive: Greed* (e.g. A forest officer accepts an overseas junket from a concession bidder) or **Need** (e.g. A forest guard on a meager salary extracts bribes to keep his family fed).

Forms of bribery can be categorized by objective such as to obtain: *Scarce benefits* (e.g. a forest concession); *Discretionary favors* (e.g. avoid prosecution for a forest offense or a license to operate a sawmill); or *Incidental benefits* (e.g. issuance of a timber transit permit).

Forms of favoritism and patronage include: Self-dealing (e.g. award harvest concession to own firm); Nepotism (e.g. hire untrained family member to be forest official); Cronyism (e.g. hire forest officer based on personal loyalty, not ability).

Forms of kickbacks include: Direct payments to officials (e.g. percentage of forest concession income); Excessive gifts and hospitality (e.g. a forest official's brother gets job with bidding forest company); Payments from subordinates (e.g. Minister demands percentage of forest officer's bribes).

Forms of fraud combined with corruption include: Person defrauds others in name of employer (e.g. for a price falsifies documents to allow sale of wood from protected species); Person defrauds employer in aid of self or others (e.g. hires "ghost" timber guards who do no work and kick back salary).

THE CHALLENGES AND EXAMPLES OF SOLUTIONS

The following case studies describe some of the challenges faced by natural-resource related corruption and anti-corruption initiatives to deal with these challenges.

Case Study: [The President's Initiative on Illegal Logging- Progress in Liberia](#)

*The President's Initiative on Illegal Logging, Associated Trade and Corruption was launched in 2003. It is a political commitment and framework that has the highest level of commitment from the U.S. Government. The U.S. uses **environmental diplomacy** to gain change. Corruption often occurs when there are break downs in infrastructure, e.g. military, police, or forest guards not being paid. Corruption is a main cause of deforestation that affects communities and wildlife. The U.S. works internationally to help develop capacity in countries to address the rule of law and development of infrastructure. As consumers, the U.S. tries to purchase tropical timber that has no perverse environmental effects. The U.S. State Department recognizes that it is important to address corruption. Transparency at the top of a government brings attention to civil society and the world. The President's Initiative promotes a comprehensive approach that plays at multiple levels.*

Liberia was an opportunity to make changes in addressing forest-related corruption and associated trade. Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, had changed laws in the country to make his corrupt logging activities legal, and exchanged timber for guns. International sanctions placed on logging from Liberia were responsible for his leaving (as 60-80% of his funds dried up). The Liberian Forest Initiative (LFI) developed by the U.S. State Department, and with memberships from the U.S. National Forest Service, Conservation International, IUCN-The Conservation Union, Fauna and Flora International and others and backed by international donors such as the World Bank and the European Commission, have leveraged more than \$10 million to put Liberia's forest sector back in place. The LFI helps to prevent corruption by helping the Liberian government to develop laws, build the forestry infrastructure, provide training, and bring much-needed aid to Liberia's forestry sector. This long-term strategy should help combat corruption. It is a model to be watched.

Case Study: [New USAID Anti-Corruption Strategy](#)

USAID has conflict-sensitive natural resource management programs. They focus on large systemic problems such as conflict diamonds, coal and oil. USAID recognizes that corruption of natural resources can lead to conflict so many of their programs help to develop systems of control such as checks and balances.

USAID recently launch a new anti-corruption strategy to develop better ways to address grand corruption. They are taking a political economy approach to address corruption. They recognize the importance that natural resources play, and use diplomatic pressures to tackle issues of corruption. All USAID programs need to explore how corruption impacts sectoral goals, and use broad approaches to address corruption and look at institutional choices such as what are appropriate institutional arrangements between governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), user groups, etc. The new strategy is available on the Internet at: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/pdfs/ac_strategy_final.pdf

Case Study: [Fighting Petty Corruption in the Democratic Republic of Congo \(DRC\) by Innovative Resources Management](#)

The purpose of the USAID-sponsored project by [Innovative Resources Management \(IRM\)](#) is to strengthen the capacity of civil society and business to promote sustainable economic growth along the Congo and its tributaries in the DRC - the "relance economique". This economic growth project along the Congo river is good for forest and biodiversity conservation as it targets those people with the greatest incentive to threaten resources and helps them become more fully integrated into structures and mechanisms that create greater accountability and improved governance. Activities include analysis of cost of corruption to diverse stakeholders; provincial networking (2 workshops, Convoi "Sans/100 Problèmes"); national and provincial information dissemination; and creation of Comité de Lutte Anti-Tracasseries (CLATs). IRM's anti-corruption approach involves mobilizing social capital across Congolese society; beginning with bread and butter (versus abstract) issues (e.g. development, food security); generating measurable impacts (e.g. numbers of barriers); producing multiplier effects (CLATs, media); facilitating political and administrative participation with: "Espace Présidentielle", Ministries, Governors, Services; forming coalitions they can springboard elsewhere (e.g. elections); and using mechanisms that can be scaled up (e.g. from local to national). Tangible results of IRM's work include multiple awareness campaigns run by civil society organizations addressing local corruption and its consequences to stakeholders and the economy. Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) and agreements have been signed between government authorities and river associations for the control and reduction of taxes.

The Relance Economique project can be distinguished from other approaches to anti-corruption in that it focuses on more conventional natural resource management issues such as forests or other extractive industries to address corruption. In the DRC case, food security, nutritional standards, agricultural markets and transportation of all sorts were being stifled by pervasive petty corruption or tracasseries. Food produced in rural areas was sometimes rotting, while scarcities and high prices driven by corruption drove up food prices in urban areas, affecting nutritional standards and health. Foreign direct investment was being stifled, limiting post-war economic recovery. IRM designed its anti-corruption approach with the understanding that it would have direct effects not only on food supplies and costs, nutrition and health, but on other related sectors of the economy. Anti-corruption in that context offered a multiplier effect for economic growth. Potentially anti-corruption measures were greater than direct investment in increased agricultural production, road infrastructure, market support, credit, etc., since investments in those areas would not offer substantial returns with tracasseries still so pervasive. Thus natural resource-related corruption is tied to other economic development and social welfare issues, not simply to the depletion of resources in the forestry, protected area, and biodiversity approaches. Anti-corruption can thus be a strategic choice of program, not simply a 'rule of law', 'justice', or conservation issue.

Case Study: [Global Forest Watch](#)

Global Forest Watch's (GFW) work in Central Africa focuses on transparency. It engages in multi-stakeholder processes to make forest information available to the public in order to improve forest exploitation practices. GFW, for example, has a MOU with the government of Cameroon to map forest title boundaries, develop a database with pertinent forest management and production information, and track the development of industrial forest exploitation infrastructure (roads, parks, etc.). Operationally these activities are carried out in close partnership with local NGOs and the forest ministry. They use satellite imagery for mapping information such as roads in logging concessions so that their legality can be measured. At the [Second Heads of State Forest Summit in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo](#), in February 2005, GFW is launching an interactive forestry atlas of Cameroon (CDrom decision-support tool targeted for private/public decision makers). Training efforts for central and provincial forest ministry staff, for example, is beginning and is designed to ensure that both technicians and decision makers will be able to use this information tool. Throughout Central Africa, an independent and voluntary forest concession monitoring system (FORCOMS) is being developed that will provide key information to international tropical timber markets and the wider public about how certain logging companies are operating with regard to forest production and management as well as the associated social and environmental impacts, . This system is currently being tested and there are plans to launch it in the summer of 2005.

Case Study: [Environmental Investigative Agency in Indonesia](#)

One applied example of fighting forest-related corruption using transparency is an initiative by the Environmental Investigative Agency who worked with a partner NGO in Indonesia to train more than 3000 people from local NGOs and communities to use video and still cameras to document illegal logging. Thirteen units were established to form a network. The participants were from environmental, labor, and human resources groups who worked together at the community level. They wanted to address illegal logging from a sustainable livelihoods perspective. The project has been effective at the public level to expose activities such as illegal logging in government owned forest and national parks as well as timber harvested that was illegally certified. The documentation of illegal logging has gotten national media attention and has resulted in policy changes and resignations of key people involved. Local timber concessionaires logging outside of their concessions have been punished. The videos and cameras were an inexpensive and quick local empowerment tool.

USEFUL TOOLS

According to Transparency International having good governance and a well-functioning multi-faceted national integrity system is one of the best defenses against corruption. (See Figure 1: The Foundations and Pillars of National Integrity.)

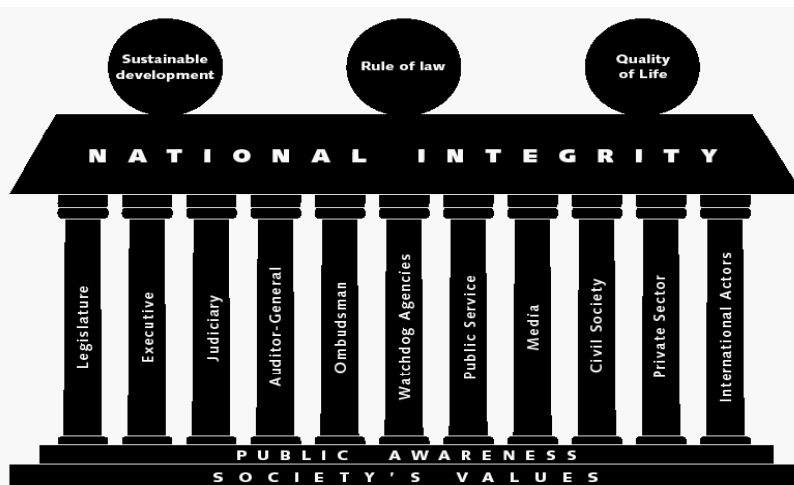


Figure 1: *The Foundations and Pillars of National Integrity*. Source: Pope (2000).

[Transparency International's Corruption Fighters Toolkit: Civil society experiences and emerging strategies](#) (available on the Internet; see <http://www.transparency.org/toolkits/index.html>) and [FIN](#) describe potential tools to address forest-related corruption including:

- **Access to Information** (e.g. create a knowledge center such as an internet based clearinghouse for sharing information on best practices to deal with illegal logging and other activities; compile a forest law reference)
- **Public Institutions** (e.g. establish and implement model forest integrity pacts for the forest sector and apply it to pilot projects)
- **Business Ethics** (e.g. draft anti-corruption business principles for the forest sector using a community of stakeholders)
- **Diagnostics** (e.g. create a forest sector corruption perception index)
- **Awareness Raising** (e.g. educate the press, run radio and TV spots, develop advertisements, comic books, street theater, and traveling theater on natural resource-related anti-corruption; draw attention to lost revenue by estimating and publicizing the amount of public funds lost to illegal logging)
- **Procurement** (e.g. organize workshops on procurement processes, develop a concession manual, and set up a concession website).

QUESTIONS DISCUSSED

Some key questions raised during the meeting discussion included:

Research-related:

- As a lot of corruption is clandestine, how do you develop indicators and data to monitor corruption?
- Investigating corruption requires time, resources, technology, and research (e.g. money flow from timber), how can it be funded especially as it is can be difficult to get ownership of this information? Is this a role for international diplomacy and policy responses?

Levels of corruption:

- Is it useful to determine the root causes of corruption and what are the stages, phases, levels, and types of regimes in order to determine how to operationalize an anti-corruption response?
- Are different approaches needed to deal with large-scale and small-scale corruption?
- How do you distinguish between petty and grand corruption as it relates to biodiversity conservation?

Policy-related:

- How do you ensure that natural resources become a component in decision making and policies (e.g. in Cameroon, in the privatization of roads, language was included that illegally harvested bushmeat could not be transported)?
- Will the decentralization model of sustainable development that give local people rights over natural resources open up space for corruption or can this be adequately addressed through good environmental governance?
- Should corruption be addressed systematically, temporally, concurrently, or sequentially?
- How do you limit perverse incentives for corruption?
- Can corruption be curbed by making things legal, such as lobbying, where it can be regulated?

Ways to Address Corruption

- How can the conservation community work with multi-national corporations to address corruption?
- How can we diversify multi-sectoral responses to reduce opportunities for corruption?
- Are there efforts to look at international money laundering (e.g. for the ivory trade and oil development)?
- How do you protect whistle-blowers?



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SUGGESTIONS FOR POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS FOR CONSERVATION NGOS

1. Work with the media to get information out about natural resource-related corruption.
2. Provide training on practical steps to deal with natural resource-related corruption. Participants range from NGO staff and the whole chain of government officials ranging from forest guards to prosecutors to judges.
3. Compile case studies of successful anti-corruption natural resource initiatives (e.g. Liberia, Cambodia).
4. Consider paying salaries for forest guards (if they are not receiving their government salaries when infrastructure breaks down) in order to prevent potential corruption.
5. Share information on conservation and corruption through websites and other resources.
6. Examine the role of timber certification in suppressing corruption.

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Michael Brown of IRM for his presentation on IRM's petty corruption activities in DRC.

Jay Singh of USAID for discussing the links between natural resource conflict and corruption.

Jerry O'Brien of USAID for presenting USAID's new anti-corruption strategy.

Jim Beck of Global Forest Watch for sharing information about their activities in Central Africa.

Gregory Mock of World Resources Institute for describing the EIA's on-the-ground anti-corruption initiatives in Indonesia.

Meeting Organizer:

The **Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group (ABCG)** comprises U.S.-based international NGOs with field-based activities in Africa. ABCG organizations include: African Wildlife Foundation, Conservation International, IUCN-The World Conservation Union, Wildlife Conservation Society, World Resources Institute, and World Wildlife Fund. ABCG explores emerging conservation issues, shares lessons learned, and seeks opportunities for collaboration. Recent issues explored by ABCG include: The Linkages between HIV/AIDS and Natural Resource Management; Food Security and Wildlife Conservation in Africa: Health Matters: The Importance of the Interface between Wildlife, Domestic Animal and Human Health for Conservation Success in Africa; Human Migration and Conservation: Issues and Interventions; Compensation for Land Lost for Protected Areas, etc. ABCG has been funded by The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. See: www.abcg.org
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Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group (ABCG) Member Organizations:

