

Supplemental Resource

Community Governance Assessment

How to Use this Resource

Phase 1, Task 1, Step 2 of the Model Guidebook for Communities discusses how community leaders can work with a local CSO to assess the community's existing community governance structures and land governance rules to evaluate the strengths of current systems and safeguards in place to support responsible investment. This resource provides more detailed steps on conducting that governance assessment.

Step-by-Step Guidance

Step 1. Gain Support. To begin this process, first gain support from trusted community leaders. Motivated and committed leadership will legitimize assessment efforts and help navigate interests, personalities and institutions so the community can be in the best position to conduct the assessment and implement its recommendations.

Step 2. Decide the “who.” Next identify existing institutions. It may be useful to begin a stakeholder map. This is defining what we call the *assessment population of interest*.

Step 3. Decide the “what.” Next decide what categories to use to evaluate the suitability of existing institutions and community structures. Consider the following categories:

- *Current roles and responsibilities:* Does this body have the time, resources, and skillsets to take on this additional role? How complementary is planning for prospective investment to the existing responsibilities of the body (consider for instance the questions posed above; how effective would this body be at helping the community to answer these questions)?
- *Existing reputation:* Are this body and its members well-respected in the community? Does it have a history of working effectively with other community structures and those of the local government? Do most members of the body

(past and present), community members and local government believe this body is effectively achieving its current mandate?

- *Active communication structures:* Does this body have regularly scheduled meetings? Does it have channels for information dissemination? Are its decisions and actions generally regarded as transparent?
- *Existing composition:* Is this body representative of individuals from all sectors of the community with interests in potential investment in the community? Does it represent vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, elderly, ethnic and religious minorities, indigenous people, and pastoralists? Is this representation meaningful, which is to say that vulnerable group representatives are able to participate effectively and have decision-making authority within the body?
- *Existing rules and protocols:* Does this body have clear procedures for selection of members and criteria for removal of members when there is bad performance?

Step 4. Decide the “how.” Next determine *how* to assess the institutions and community structures. Consider whether to use quantitative or qualitative methods. Using quantitative methods will require developing a scale (such as a 1 to 4 scale for low, basic, moderate and high capacity). Consider who is best positioned to provide this information. This may include existing and former members of each institution or structure; community leadership; local government; members of local associations; and community members. Ensure information sources are representative of the community as whole, paying special attention to include vulnerable groups such as women, youth, elderly, ethnic and religious minorities, indigenous people, and pastoralists. Finally, determine the method of data collection that is most appropriate; options include holding semi-structured interviews, holding focus-group discussions, and using written surveys.

Step 5. Perform the assessment and validate findings. After designing the assessment, the team must conduct the assessment and validate findings in a community meeting. During this meeting, all stakeholders should be able to ask questions and express their opinions on the findings. Consider the reactions of the community and document them in the final version of the assessment.