



A Handbook for
Community-Based Monitoring
IN UGANDA'S FORESTRY SECTOR



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ACRONYMS

CBM	Community-Based Monitoring
CFM	Collaborative Forest Management
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DB	Duty-Bearer, e.g. LC III Chairperson, NFA Forest Supervisor
DPC	District Police Commander
DFO	District Forest Officer
DFS	District Forest Services
DNRO	District Natural Resource Officer
EP	Environmental Police
FOREST	Forest Resources Sector Transparency Programme
FSSD	Forestry Sector Support Department
GPS	Global Positioning System
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JESE	Joint Effort to Save the Environment
LCIII	Local Council 3 (sub-county level)
LCV	Local Council 5 (district level)
MIRAC	Mid Western Region Anti Corruption Coalition
NFA	National Forestry Authority
RAC	Rwenzori Anti-Corruption Coalition
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
SMS	Short Message Service
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to guide Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), local governments and forest agencies (National Forestry Authority, Forestry Sector Support Department,, etc.) in implementing democratic governance processes in the forestry sector.

The handbook describes a Community-Based Monitoring (CBM) system that is applicable to the forestry sector, but also hopes to inspire the implementation of CBM systems in other sectors with the aim of improving governance and information sharing.

The development of the handbook is based on CARE International in Uganda's previous experiences promoting social accountability in the forestry sector. Previous challenges have been addressed and best practices have been forwarded into this system.

The CBM system is based on volunteer community members who live near forests and can observe and report activities going on in them. The system helps to create awareness of the communities' rights and promotes ownership of forest resources. At the same time, it improves the accountability, transparency and responsiveness of forest management agencies by creating reporting mechanisms and coordination between stakeholders in the forest sector.

The handbook provides an overview of features and best practices for a CBM system, especially regarding the possibilities for applying Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and the participation of community-based monitors.

SUPPORT FOR THE CBM SYSTEM

It is important to emphasize that a CBM system is supported by various legal provisions in Uganda that provide the right to share information in the interest of the public. The 1995 Constitution of Uganda provides for people's participation and a right to access information (The Access to Information Act 2005). The 2009 Anti-Corruption Act defines corruption, offenses and penalties. The 2010 Whistle Blower's Protection Act provides for the protection of people who make disclosures on matters related to corruption. In particular, it provides for the procedures by which individuals in both the private and public sector may disclose information that relates to irregular, illegal or corrupt practices.

With this clarification, the handbook will now concentrate on explaining the necessary features for establishing a CBM system.

DEFINITION OF KEY-CONCEPTS

Community-Based Monitor

A volunteer community member who follows up and reports on promised service deliveries, events, projects, activities, programmes and issues. They are responsible for reporting to duty-bearers. They are selected by the community and given basic training using reporting tools and engaging with duty bearers in the relevant sector.

Duty-Bearers

Duty-bearers are state/local governments and CSOs that are required under (inter)national laws to meet their obligations of respecting, protecting and fulfilling people's rights.

Right Holders

Right holders are communities with legal rights to demand certain service deliveries from the duty-bearer.

Dialogue Meetings

These are meetings that gather a range of stakeholders (public, private and civil actors) who have a role in the relevant sector. They aim to increase coordination between the stakeholders, address obstacles that prevent good governance in the sector, create action plans, spur discussion and facilitate information sharing.

Advocacy

This is when an individual or group aims to influence public policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social institutions. It can include many activities that a person or organization undertakes including media campaigns, public speaking, commissioning, publishing research and conducting stakeholder meetings.

SETTING UP THE CBM-SYSTEM

Selection of monitors

The monitors need to be selected in a process that involves the communities and the local leaders. This builds consensus, creates awareness of roles and creates ownership of the initiative.

The monitor should meet the following criteria:

- Not actively engaged in partisan politics
- Resident of that specific parish
- Basic english reading and writing skills
- Willingness to serve voluntarily
- No criminal history (both recorded and unrecorded)
- Able to mobilize communities
- Trusted by community members and preferably working with existing community structures similar to CBM like collaborative forest management wetland management groups, etc.

Training of monitors

Before a monitor can start reporting on activities in the forest sector, (s)he should receive training in basic CBM including forest laws, rights and obligations of citizens, the CBM-system and its tools, how to engage with duty-bearers, and how to present forestry and human rights issues in a non-confrontational manner. The monitors should also receive training to avoid situations where their information gathering and sharing could lead to safety issues.

Identifying the duty-bearers

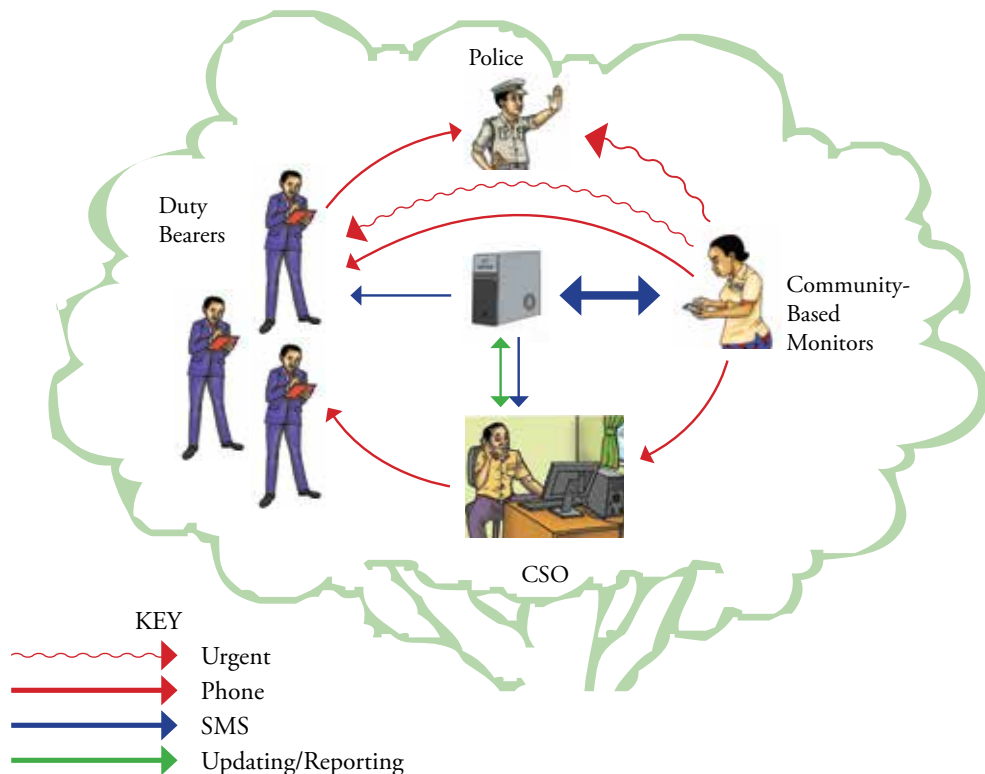
The duty-bearers should be identified before the launch of the system by creating lists that includes name, position and contact details.

Establishment of a phone user-group system

Ensuring a good flow of information is crucial, but it is also important the actors in the system do not incur costs related to information sharing. All monitors and select duty-bearers should receive a phone connected to a closed phone user-selected group system that ensures free communication between them. This will integrate the monitors and duty-bearers in a communication loop that facilitates quick information sharing and responsiveness. The actors identified as members of this phone user-group are the following: RDC, DFO, EP, NFA Sector Manager, CSOs, LCIII from each sub-county, all community-based monitors, DPC, and Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment.

ICT-system	The Information and Communication Technology (ICT)-platform allows reporting via SMS from standard phones and via an application from Smartphones. This guarantees a broad user group as it allows people with Smartphones to provide the best possible data but does not exclude those without. Furthermore, the ICT-system should receive and store reports, provide hierarchical access to its various users and transform data into statistics for later use in evaluation and advocacy. Lastly, the server should forward the received reports from the monitors to a SMS alert list of duty-bearers.
SMS-alert system	When a report is received, the server forwards the report as a SMS to a list of duty-bearers. The receivers of this SMS will be duty-bearers from the same sub-county and duty-bearers operating at the district level. At the sub-county level these duty-bearers include Chairperson LCIII, Sub-County Chief, Gombolola Internal Security Officer, and NFA Forest Supervisor. At the district level the list includes; RDC, DPC, DFO, DNRO, EP, NFA Sector and Ranger Managers, RAC, MIRAC, JESE and the Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment.
Establishment of a toll-free line	A toll-free line should be created at the national level (NFA in the forestry sector) so that communities can report directly to it. The implementing agency should ensure that someone is always responding to calls so that it is effective and ensures responsiveness.
Information-handouts	Each monitor should receive a prioritized list with names and numbers of duty-bearers to whom they can report activities. Each monitor should also be given a list of keywords and content that should be included when reporting through SMS.
Translation of content	All relevant content like SMS keywords, Smartphone applications, handouts and manuals should be translated to relevant languages so as to avoid discrimination due to levels of education or geographical location.
Reporting scheme	Each month the monitors have to fill out a document which answers some basic questions such as what activities they have observed and where. They should also reflect about the causes of the main issues in the forestry sector of their sub-county. The completed document should be given to local duty-bearers and the regional contacts.
Access and publication of information	For the system to function effectively, there is need for commitment and transparency of parties, therefore the forestry management agencies should provide communities with information about activities such as authentic documentation of forest products. This information could be publicized through notice boards so the communities know who is legally allowed to work in the sector.
Holding dialogue meetings	Reports from CBMs are synthesized and discussed at the forestry governance forums, which are held every quarter at the district level, bimonthly at the sub-county level and yearly at the national level. These meetings should coordinate actions between the different stakeholders and provide feedback to the communities.

OVERVIEW OF THE CBM- SYSTEM



Key Features of the CBM-System

The monitors and communities are the cornerstones of the system because they provide the information that is acted upon. When the monitors observe a suspicious activity, they first fill out a form on their Smartphone or send an SMS containing information about the activity observed. It is sent to the server which then forwards it to other pre-determined local duty-bearers. Lastly, the monitor calls the most important duty-bearers to give more comprehensive information and ensure they take action.

All actors have access to the report as soon as the server has received it, guaranteeing that all receive the same correct information. Only some CSO-members will be given administrator rights to change features of the system and create statistical abstracts.

The CSOs follow-up with the duty-bearers to make sure the reports are responded to and the issues are addressed. If more action is needed, they take the report to higher-level duty-bearers. Finally, they should facilitate bi-monthly dialogue meetings at the sub-county level, and quarterly meetings at the district level with relevant stakeholders.

STEPS IN REPORTING

STEP 1 *A monitor observes or is informed by a community member of a suspicious activity or rights abuse in a nearby forest.*



STEP 2 *The monitor immediately goes out to the forest or the spot of the reported activity and takes the (Smart) phone with him/her.*



STEP 3 *The monitor confirms the report, takes a picture and fills the form in the application (or sends an SMS) on the spot and sends it to the server.*



STEP 4 *The monitor calls a sub-county, district or NEA duty-bearer and gives a detailed description of the activity observed.*



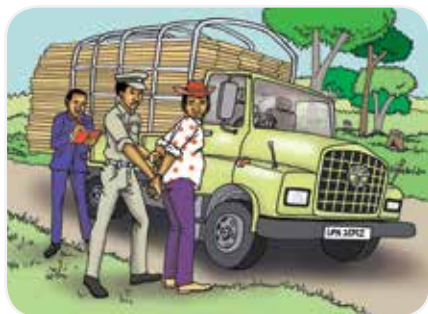
STEP 5 The server receives report from monitor and forwards it to the duty-bearers on the SMS alert list AND notifies the monitor that the report is received.



STEP 6 All the people on the SMS alert list can now access the full report on the server



STEP 7 The duty-bearer arrives at the area and arrests people who are involved in illegal activities.



STEP 8 The CSO calls the duty-bearer and is informed of the action taken. The CSO then updates the report on the server. The CSO calls the monitor and updates him/her on the action taken and thanks him/her for the work.



STEP 9 The case will appear in the quarterly meeting and serve as a statistic of a resolved issue in to the CBM-system.



NOTE

The above example is an ideal reporting case, and is not necessarily the typical situation that the monitors experience on the ground. There will be times when only elements of the ideal case can be used.

The following sections are examples of cases which might necessitate other actions by the community-based monitors.

**Transport
of forest
resources**

When a suspicious vehicle transporting charcoal or timber is observed, the monitor should immediately call the police. It's important to note any characteristics of the vehicle, such as color, license number, size, its current position and the direction it's going. If documentation is presented claiming legitimate business, it should be forwarded to the DFO or NFA officials so the information can be quickly verified or denied. Later, a report can be sent to the server and the CSO can be informed.

**Human
rights abuses**

If human rights abuses are observed or heard about, the monitor should properly document the injuries, if possible, and take the person to a police station to fill out an official report. Then, the monitor should report to the server and call the CSO. The CSO should take over the case from there.

**Only traces
of illegal
activities**

If the monitor comes too late to observe an active illegal activity (s)he should still make a report and inform the CSO. This will help form a picture of illegal activities in the forests so that the dialogue meetings can address these problems and demand action from the duty-bearers.



No Contact

If for some reason the monitor is unable to reach the relevant duty-bearers, the monitor should call another duty-bearer from the list and explain the situation. Responsibility now shifts to this new duty-bearer.

HOW TO REPORT USING A SMARTPHONE

The Smartphone-system works through an application (app) on the phone. The app contains a form with a number of questions that the monitor can tick off or make comments on. When the form is filled, it will automatically be sent to the server. The server automatically registers who has sent the form, when it was received and GPS tracks the area it was sent from.

The overall procedure should not take more than five minutes and the monitor is posed the following ten questions:

PROCEDURE	EXAMPLES
Name of the district and sub-county with where observation is made	Hoima, Kabwoya
Picture of observation*	
Name of the forest where observation is made*	e.g. Budongo Forest 
Type of land/reserve where activity happened	Central Forest Reserve
Type of activity to report	Timber cutting
Estimated size and type of activity	Large-scale timber cutting
Estimated number of persons involved in activity	5
Which duty-bearers are you going to report it to?	NFA Sector Manager and LCIII
Additional information about encroacher/ extractor	The encroachers are planning to setup temporary housing structures and a market
Any other information that could be relevant?	They were violent when approached

Under each of these ten questions, there will be multiple answer possibilities. These possibilities need to be ticked off by the monitor so that the information passed forward is as specific as possible.

For example, Question 5 will have the following possibilities when entered and the monitor has to tick off one or more before proceeding to the next question:

5) Type of activity to report:

- Transport of forest resources
- Encroachment
- Human rights abuses
- Poaching
- Other activities (room for specification)



Some of the questions have more built-in second and/or third level questions. This means that after ticking off the first option, new questions are automatically generated and require answers. An example of this is

Question 5, where the following information is automatically requested:

5) Type of activity to report:

Transport of forest resources (first level choice)

- Timber (second level option)
- Charcoal (second level option)
- Has the activity been verified as illegal?
- Yes (third level option)
- No (third level option)



After the monitor has ticked off that he is reporting about “Transport of Forest Resources,” he is additionally asked by the app if it was transport of timber or charcoal, and if it was verified as illegal.

In this way, the system ensures that the best possible data is transferred to the server, and statistics can be extracted in various ways by all actors.

Additionally, the reports are linked to a map on a public webpage that will give the public an overview of the number of activities observed. Before being published, an administrator needs to verify the content of the report in order to make sure that the information published on the webpage is correct.

HOW TO REPORT THROUGH AN SMS

The reporting system for standard phones is based on SMS. It is limited to the content in the SMS, automatic time registration and which phone the report was sent from. The SMS system, therefore, requires a thorough training of the monitors in order to ensure the content quality in the SMS. To help remember the information it is important to include in the SMS, the monitor can use the 3W rule:

What?	Describe the type of activity that was observed
Where?	Name of the sub-county and forest the activity was going on
Who?	Describe any recognizable characteristics of offenders

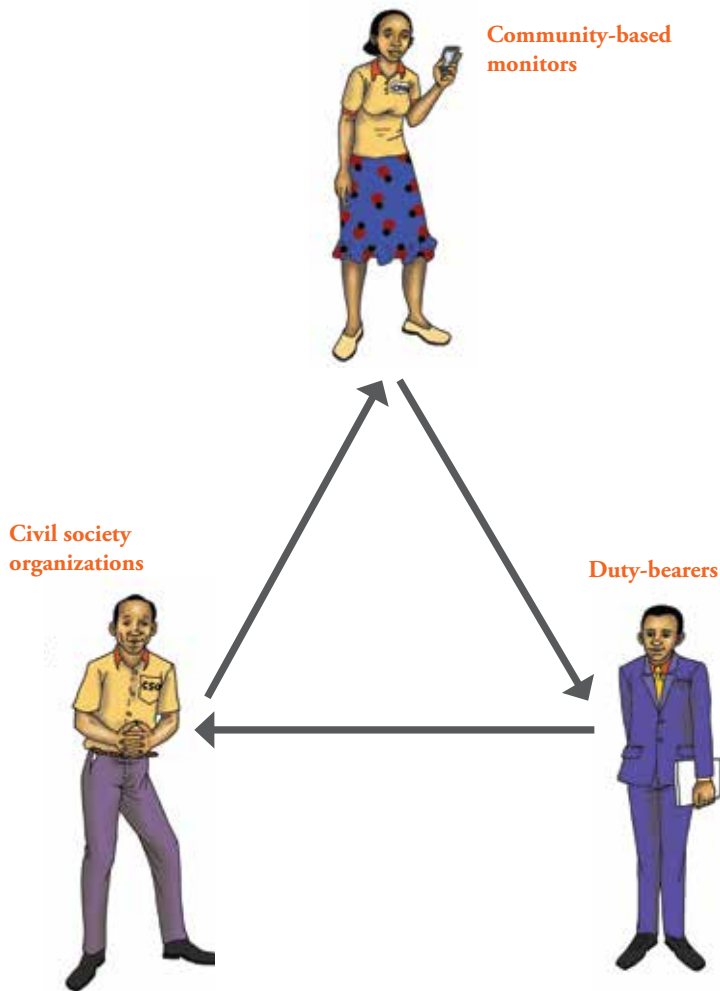


An example of a proper SMS-report text could be: “Illegal timber transport from Itwara Forest in Kyarusenzi Sub-county, going on Kampala road. The lorry is red and has the license number ABC 123D”.

The server will then categorize the SMS in one of two groups based on some pre-determined keywords.

The above report would be categorized as being a transport type of activity based on the keyword “transport” and as coming from the Kyarusenzi Sub-county based on the keyword “Kyarusenzi.” These categorizations will allow the system to forward a SMS to the relevant duty-bearers connected to the Kyarusenzi Sub-county. It will also be useful for later statistics such as determining what types of activities go on in which sub-counties.

The system also includes an administrator who can categorize the SMS based on the content if it does not include any of the keywords or has spelling errors.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACTORS

This section contains a brief overview of the roles and responsibilities of each actor involved in the CBM system.

Community-Based Monitors

- Undertake community dialogues and field observations in and around the forests; report any suspicious activities
- Use the Smartphone app or send an SMS to report suspicious activities to the server
- Call relevant (sub-county) duty-bearers after reporting to the server
- Work with local level duty-bearers through monthly meetings

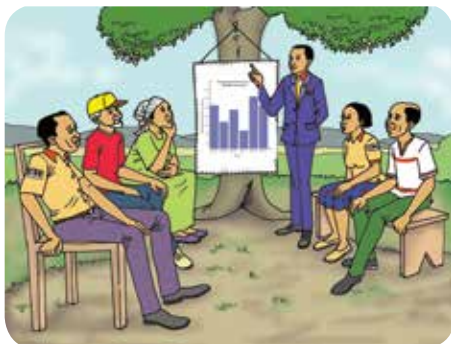
- Be a change agent and help create basic awareness for other community members, e.g. participate in community meetings
- Participate in meetings at the sub-county level and at district level meetings where testimonies might be needed
- Once every month, fill out a written scheme with information of activities observed.

Civil Society Organizations

- Facilitate the necessary capacity building required for monitors in forestry issues and the use of monitoring tools
- Follow up with duty-bearers, particularly NFA and DFS to ensure response and action is taken
- Consolidate monitor reports for transmission to duty bearers and/or translate them into lobbying tools
- Provide basic facilitation to monitors for their work in the forestry sector
- Develop policy briefs and research reports in forestry areas
- Establish and maintain the ICT system
- Conduct national level engagements with duty-bearers concerning issues identified by monitors at field level
- Use the improved data to undertake evidence-based advocacy on the issue of forest degradation
- Extract quarterly and yearly statistics from the server to capture development and improve evaluation and advocacy
- Arrange periodic dialogue meetings for stakeholders in the forest sector at the sub-county, district or/and regional level to address stalled issues
- Be mediators in case of conflicts between monitors, communities and duty bearers.

Duty-bearers

- Verify the reports from the monitors and provide feedback
- Be responsive to reports and observations from dialogue meetings and monitors. Engage with other duty-bearers to find solutions
- Participate in dialogue meetings; engage in relevant multi-stakeholder forums and



media engagements

- Make information available about activities in the forest sector, e.g. post information about activities in nearby areas on public boards, publicize information about licenses given.

MOTIVATION OF THE MONITORS

Community-based monitors are volunteers, but some basic infrastructure and initiatives should be put in place to facilitate their work and continue to motivate their participation in the system.

- Monitors should be part of CFM where a CFM group already exists
- Provide monitors with monitoring tools and training
- Facilitate monitors to undertake meetings, dialogues and reports
- Link groups to other development initiatives from the district. The CSOs will provide basic inputs for the monitors such as telephones, transport refunds, and training opportunities
- Duty bearers should provide feedback and respond to cases
- Facilitate group participation in other development activities such as VSLA
- Develop some reward systems such as awards for best performing monitors
- Give them feedback whenever the CBM-system has achieved some concrete results, even if not in their area
- Give them opportunities to meet across sub-counties so they sense they are a part of a bigger movement and can exchange experiences.



Training Guide for Community-Based Monitoring

Why the guide? This training guide will help to streamline and harmonise the training content for community-based monitors to improve transparency, accountability and responsiveness in the forestry sector. The guide specifies topics and key contents of the training that will enable understanding of the model and enhance skills for monitors and duty-bearers. This guide is not cast in stone; the topics only cover the most critical sessions and can be altered according to the prevailing conditions.

Who are the target participants?

- Duty-bearers at all levels
- Civil society organizations
- Community-based monitors

TOPIC /CONTENT	OBJECTIVE	METHODS	RESOURCES	TIME
<i>Introduction to Good Governance:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Key elements of governance ■ Highlights of the context for promoting accountability and good governance within Uganda ■ Causes of governance failure in the forest sector ■ Power centers for influence 	Participants understand concepts of good governance in relationship to forestry and citizen's participation.	Lecture/ presentation Discussions	Governance Program context Brief of promoting good governance under the REPA program. Power Point projector Flip charts and stationery	3hrs
<i>Introduction to Community-Based Monitoring Model</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What is CBM ■ Roles/ responsibilities of CBM ■ Stakeholders and relationships within the CBM framework ■ Sources of information for monitoring ■ Scope of their monitoring 	Participants understand the CBM model and its relationship to citizen's rights and good governance.	Buzz groups Presentations	Source book on CBMES-Uganda Debt Network. Handbook for Community-Based Monitoring by Kibale civil society organization network.	3hrs

TOPIC /CONTENT	OBJECTIVE	METHODS	RESOURCES	TIME
<p><i>Forest Governance:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Forest Laws and policy ■ The chain of custody for forest products (timber, charcoal) ■ Roles of forest management institutions ■ Anti Corruption Act 2009 and Whistle Blowers Protection Act 2010, Access to Information Act 2005 	Participants are able to understand the legal frameworks that enhance good governance in the forest sector	<p>Power Point presentation</p> <p>Group discussion</p>	<p>National Tree Planting and Forestry Act 2003</p> <p>Forest Policy Tax Regulation 2000</p> <p>Anti-Corruption Act 2009</p> <p>Whistle Blowers Protection Act 2010</p> <p>Access to Information Act 2005.</p> <p>Ministry of Water and Environment Client Charter</p>	3hrs
<p><i>Forest Illegalities and Manifestations of Corruption:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Causes, forms of corruption, practices that breed corruption 	Participants understand forest illegalities and forms of corruption	<p>Brainstorming session</p> <p>Experience sharing</p>	<p>Experience sharing</p> <p>Documentation from CSO</p>	2hrs
<p><i>Human Rights and Environmental Governance Laws</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Building civic competence ■ Benefit sharing 	Participants understand their rights and obligations in forest governance	<p>Brainstorming</p> <p>Presentation</p>	<p>Constitution 1995</p> <p>Annex 4: FOREST Programme</p> <p>Know your rights – HURINET</p>	2hrs

TOPIC /CONTENT	OBJECTIVE	METHODS	RESOURCES	TIME
<p><i>Monitoring Tools:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How to use a Smartphone (sending SMS, filling the information sheet, pictures, caller users, phone applications, server language, codes) ■ How to collect information, sources, and evidence-based data collection and filling of hard copy forms ■ Reporting channels, documentation, how to organize and conduct a dialogue 	Community-based monitors to be able to report forest crimes/illegalities and demand for response	<p>Lecture</p> <p>Group work</p> <p>Demonstration</p>	Manual of application of ICT in forestry.	10hrs
<p><i>Communication Skills:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How to effectively communicate with all members and stakeholders in the CBM system 	Participants are equipped with negotiation and presentation skills that include body language, style, tone and articulation	<p>Facilitation</p> <p>Group work</p> <p>Role Plays</p>	<p>Communication training guides</p> <p>Tool kits for extension workers</p>	4hrs

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