



Strengthening Voices for Better Choices

Lessons learnt about the development
of sectoral agendas for forest governance in Acre



South American Forest Conservation Programme



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Presentation

IUCN is composed of members from various sectors and countries, acting as a forum for governmental and non-governmental organizations, researchers, and communities seeking joint responses to the challenges of conservation and development. Its mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature, and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. To accomplish this mission, IUCN is present in all continents in the world. Its actions are the result of a flexible programmatic focus, based on the belief that each situation requires a specific strategy that contributes to the generation of knowledge, empowerment and the strengthening of governance.

The Strengthening Voices for Better Choices Project (SVBC) was implemented in six countries, including Brazil through IUCN's Project Office in Acre. For IUCN, the project represented an opportunity to deepen its knowledge regarding one of its most relevant roles – the promotion of dialogue among different sectors of society with the aim of strengthening relations and fostering shared actions and solutions. It allowed its partners and members to develop knowledge and capabilities based on experience, thus enabling the different actors to improve their participation in governance spaces and processes. The actors were able to experience governance in practice, and through their participation and strengthening, they contributed to the improvement of forest resource management and to the integration of conservation values into the economy and the market.

The systematization presented in this document aims not only to identify, document and socialize the lessons IUCN learnt from the SVBC project, in Brazil but is also in itself a stage in the governance process, enabling reflection and action learning by those who participated in the experience. Through this, we hope to catalyse the implementation of new actions led by strengthened members and partners who join together to meet the challenges faced locally, nationally and internationally.

João de Queiroz
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List of Acronyms

APL	Arranjo Produtivo Local (Local Productive Arrangement)
ATER	Assistência Técnica e Extensão Rural (Technical Assistance and Rural Extension)
ASIMMANEJO	Associação das Indústrias de Madeira de Manejo do Estado do Acre (Acre State Managed Timber Industry Association)
CEF	Conselho Estadual de Florestas (State Forest Council)
CEMACT	Conselho Estadual do Meio Ambiente, Ciência e Tecnologia (State Council for Environment, Science and Technology)
CEDRFS	Conselho Estadual de Desenvolvimento Rural Florestal Sustentável (State Council for Sustainable Rural Forest Development)
CNS	Conselho Nacional dos Seringueiros (National Council of Rubber Tappers)
COOPERFLORESTA	Cooperativa dos Produtores Florestais Comunitários (Community Forest Producers Cooperative)
CPI-AC	Comissão Pró-Índio do Acre (Commission Pro-Indigenous People of Acre)
CTA	Centro dos Trabalhadores da Amazônia (Centre for Amazonian Workers)
CUT-AC	Central Unica dos Trabalhadores of Acre (Workers Central Union of Acre)
FGV	Fundação Getúlio Vargas (Getulio Vargas Foundation)
FIEAC	Federação das Indústrias do Estado do Acre (Federation of Industries of the State of Acre)
FUNTAC	Fundação de Tecnologia do Estado do Acre (State of Acre Technology Foundation)
GTA	Grupo de Trabalho Amazônico (Amazon Working Group)
IMAZON	Instituto Homem e Meio Ambiente da Amazônia (Amazon Man and Environment Institute)
MPE	Ministério Público do Estado do Acre (State of Acre Public Ministry)
PROCOMPI	Programa de Apoio à Competitividade das Micro e Pequenas Indústrias (Support Programme for the Competitiveness of Micro and Small Industries)
RAHM	Rede Acreana de Homens e Mulheres (Acre Network of Men and Women)
SEAPROF	Secretaria de Estado de Extensão Agroflorestal e Produção Familiar (State Secretariat of Agroforestry Extension and Household-based Production)
SEBRAE	Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas (Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service)
SEF	Secretaria de Estado de Floresta (State Secretariat of Forest)
SEMA	Secretaria de Estado de Meio Ambiente (State Secretariat for the Environment)
SEPLANDS	Secretaria de Estado do Planejamento e Desenvolvimento Econômico Sustentável (State Secretariat for Sustainable Economic Planning and Development)
SFB	Serviço Florestal Brasileiro (Brazilian Forest Service)
SIM	Sistema de Implementação e Verificação Modular (Modular Implementation and Verification System for Forest Certification)
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
WWF	World Wildlife Fund



1. The Project in Acre



Strengthening Voices for Better Choices (SVBC) was an IUCN project supported by the European Union (EU) and implemented between 2005 and 2009 in six countries: Brazil, Ghana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. It was part of a series of actions taken by the EU to ban the entry into its territory of illegal timber supplied by an industry that causes serious environmental damage, disrespects human rights, and inflicts huge damage on the economies of the producing countries. SVBC sought to promote improved governance arrangements in order to

engender sustainable and equitable forest conservation and management. Its starting point was that the fragility or absence of forest governance has allowed deforestation, degradation and illegal timber trade to occur. In this context, the project aimed to identify and promote arrangements to strengthen forest governance in six tropical forest countries. With effective support from the government, civil society and the private sector, these arrangements may contribute to sustainability and equity in the management and conservation of forests.

Environmental governance is the process of integrating and harmonizing policies, actions, institutions, tools and information to enable the different actors (public, private, NGOs and local communities) to manage conflicts, seek points of agreement, make fundamental decisions, and take responsibility for their actions. In this case, forest governance refers to the procedures of decision making and social control over forest activities¹. IUCN understands that forest resource management and conservation are determined by choices made by society, and that reform of governance systems

¹ In this document, 'social movement' refers to organizations that represent and/or assist forest peoples, including community organizations, trade associations, NGOs and articulation networks.

only occurs with the support of society. This requires the effective involvement of the actors and the negotiation of interests². For this reason the SVBC project focused on supporting, facilitating and promoting multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSD) in addition to contributing to capacity building and a more effective participation of the actors in governance spaces.

In the Brazilian State of Acre, SVBC worked to remove incentives for unsustainable and illegal activities through measures that increased the attractiveness of sustainable alternatives. The focus of the project followed the principle that illegal logging is essentially a problem of governance, not law enforcement.

These considerations led IUCN, together with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF Brasil), its main partner in the SVBC project, to develop a three-pronged strategy under the banner 'Free Acre of Illegal Logging'. The work focused on the promotion of best practices, the creation of responsible markets, and the improvement of forest governance.

Promoting best practices

Together with WWF Brasil and members of WWF's Global Forest and Trade Network, SVBC supported the establishment of the SIM programme in Acre. SIM, or the Modular Implementation and Verification System for Forest Certification, is a stepwise approach to achieving forest certification

for logging companies. Participants commit to improving their management practices and obtaining FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification within four years.

The SIM programme also supports forest governance, knowledge generation and capacity building. It not only targets forest producers, but also works with industrial wood consumers to develop control methodologies, improve supply capabilities, and deploy the SIM chain of custody system as a mechanism to control wood sources and create pressure for change among suppliers.

In 2009, SVBC, together with WWF Brasil, worked to identify the sustainable timber production capacity of the area of influence of the Rio Branco Industrial



² St. Lauren, Maginnis, Broekhoven & Markopoulos, 2009. IUCN's role in forest governance reform processes. IUCN Forest Conservation Programme. Gland, Switzerland.

Park. The information generated will enable the optimization of decision making regarding the places where sustainable uses can be practiced and the location of forest industries.

Creating responsible markets

Another focus of SVBC's work in Acre was the reduction of unfair price competition from illegal logging, and the improvement of market access for legal products. This was accomplished through responsible public and corporate procurement policies. For many years, Acre has been encouraging the use of certified wood and supporting local forest producers and associations. However, there are still no federal or state legal mechanisms requiring authorities in Acre to purchase legal or sustainable timber.

SVBC worked to establish such a mechanism in Acre through 'Friends of the Amazon', a responsible purchasing programme operated by the Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV). Both the Acre State Government and the municipality of Rio Branco are members of the programme. The project made an intensive effort at the state level to raise awareness of the need for new public purchasing procedures and a reform of the bidding laws. Official estimates suggest that about 40% of the timber harvested in Acre is consumed within the state, and that the public sector accounts for 70% of this consumption. A change in procurement policies to promote good forest management would have a great impact on Acre's forests, so it is encouraging that both the state government and the municipality of Rio Branco have made a commitment to purchase only legal timber. In the corporate sector, responsible purchasing was promoted among the participants in the SIM programme.

Improving forest governance

To improve governance, SVBC focused on building sectoral agendas as instruments



to articulate the different actors' efforts around the promotion and strengthening of sustainable forest activities and to combat illegal timber trade.

Two agendas were worked on between 2007 and 2009: one, initially called a 'Socio-environmental Agenda', involving social movements³ (including assistance institutions and organizations representing forest peoples⁴), and another called the 'Private Timber Sector Agenda', involving private sector, civil society and government institutions that carry out and/or promote entrepreneurial timber production. During the process, the former was renamed the 'Social Movement Agenda' and the latter the 'Private Timber Production Multi-sectoral Agenda'

(referred to in this document as the 'Multi-sectoral Agenda'), because it connects entrepreneurs, knowledge production and/or assistance institutions, and government sectors related to timber production. Through a series of meetings and consultations, stakeholders were helped to clarify their governance needs and demands, to better understand the concerns of other groups and, above all, to generate innovative ideas for public policy reforms leading to improved forest governance.

The aim of the systematization was to identify lessons learnt from the voices of those who lived the experience, and to document and socialize them in this publication.

³ In this document, 'social movement' refers to organizations that represent and/or assist forest peoples, including community organizations, trade associations, NGOs and articulation networks.

⁴ The expression 'forest peoples' refers to traditional peoples for whom forest resources represent an important means of ensuring their material and social reproduction.

2. Systematizing the lessons learnt

The systematization of the agenda-building experience was proposed and facilitated by IUCN, and carried out in a participatory manner as a moment of reflection on the process. For this purpose, the actors involved in the experience were invited to review it

during two workshops: one for the main actors involved in developing the Social Movement Agenda and another for those associated with the Multi-sectoral Agenda. With the aim of verifying achievements, successes and mistakes, and of trying to understand the

logic of the process and comprehend the lessons learnt from the experience, the workshops addressed the following topics:

- Identification of initial expectations: What goals did the agenda-building process aim to achieve?;
- Conceptions of governance held by the actors involved;
- Construction of a Time Line for both processes, identifying (from the point of view of the actors involved) the most significant moments and changes during the period and the main tensions or difficulties in the experience;
- Lessons and recommendations (Why did things happen as they did? What did this mean for us? What would we do differently? What would we do the same?).

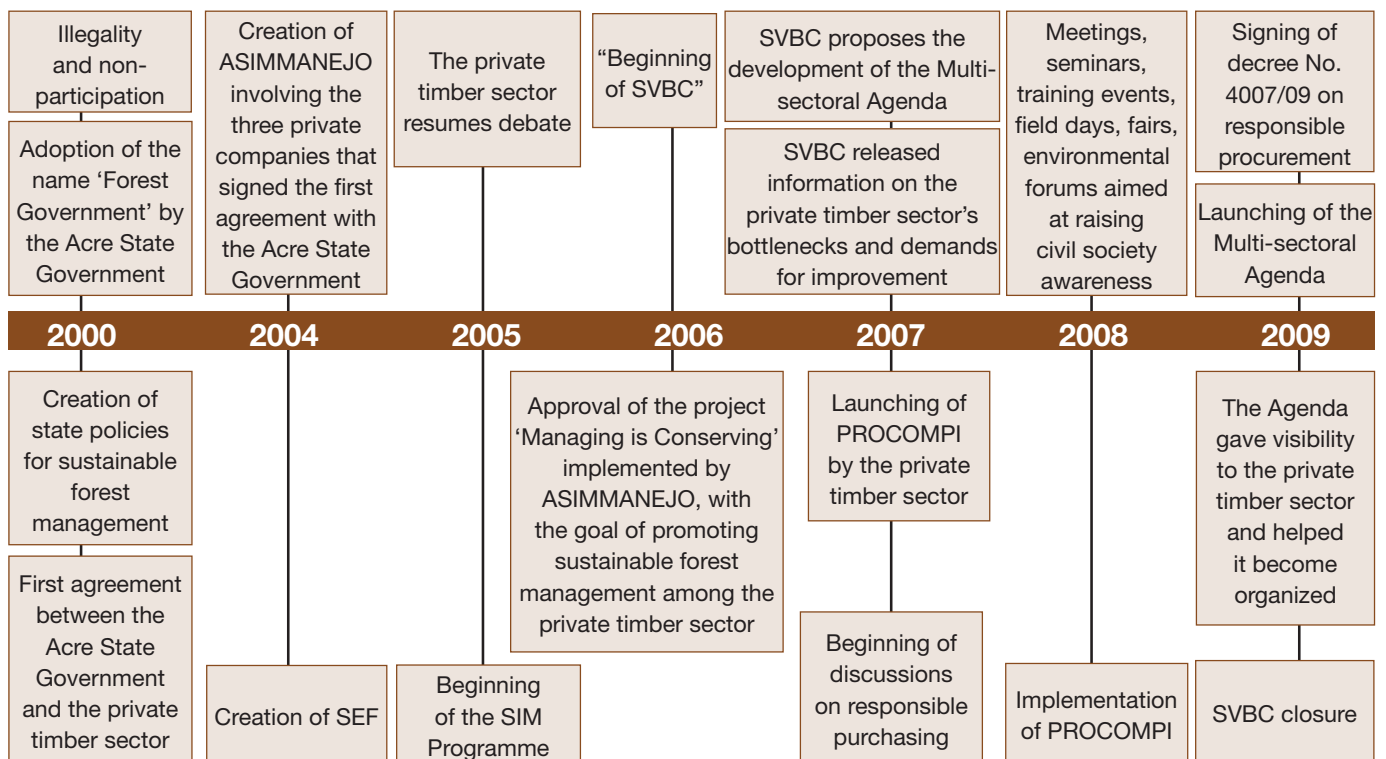
The information was complemented by interviews with key actors, both those who participated in the previous process and those who did not. A new workshop, held during the final stage of systematization and attended by the actors involved in both agendas, allowed them to share and reflect on lessons learnt and discuss prospects for the continuation of actions to strengthen forest governance.

Based on the content generated by the workshops and interviews, as well as on the implementation of SVBC in six countries, IUCN's team reflected on and developed recommendations regarding its role in assisting and facilitating processes of dialogue and governance strengthening.



3. Ways and paths: the story of the agendas

From villain to sustainable development partner – the journey of the business sector



This is a story of change – a change that became possible, on the one hand, thanks to the actions of the Forest Government⁵, and, on the other, to the raised awareness of timber entrepreneurs who are taking leadership in a new form of production based on sustainable management. Thus, the story of the timber business sector's engagement with the concept of sustainability is intertwined with the story of a small group of businessmen who signed the first pact with the Forest Government in 2000. Until then the sector

lived on the margins of legality and was seen as "the villain in the story". When the Forest Government took office, it began a dialogue with the sector concerning sustainable forest management. The process resulted in a first pact consisting of 23 agreements. However, only three companies signed it. These three founded ASIMMANEJO, an association of private timber companies whose statutes contain requirements on social responsibility and sustainable management.

The state government, in turn, created the Forest Secretariat and a policy for the forest-based industrial sector, with emphasis on the training of manpower for forest management. Interesting collaborations began to develop between ASIMMANEJO and socio-environmental NGOs such as WWF Brasil and the Imazon Institute. The beginning of the SIM programme in 2005, implemented by WWF Brasil with support from IUCN, turned a new page in this story. In 2007, the launching of PROCOMPI by

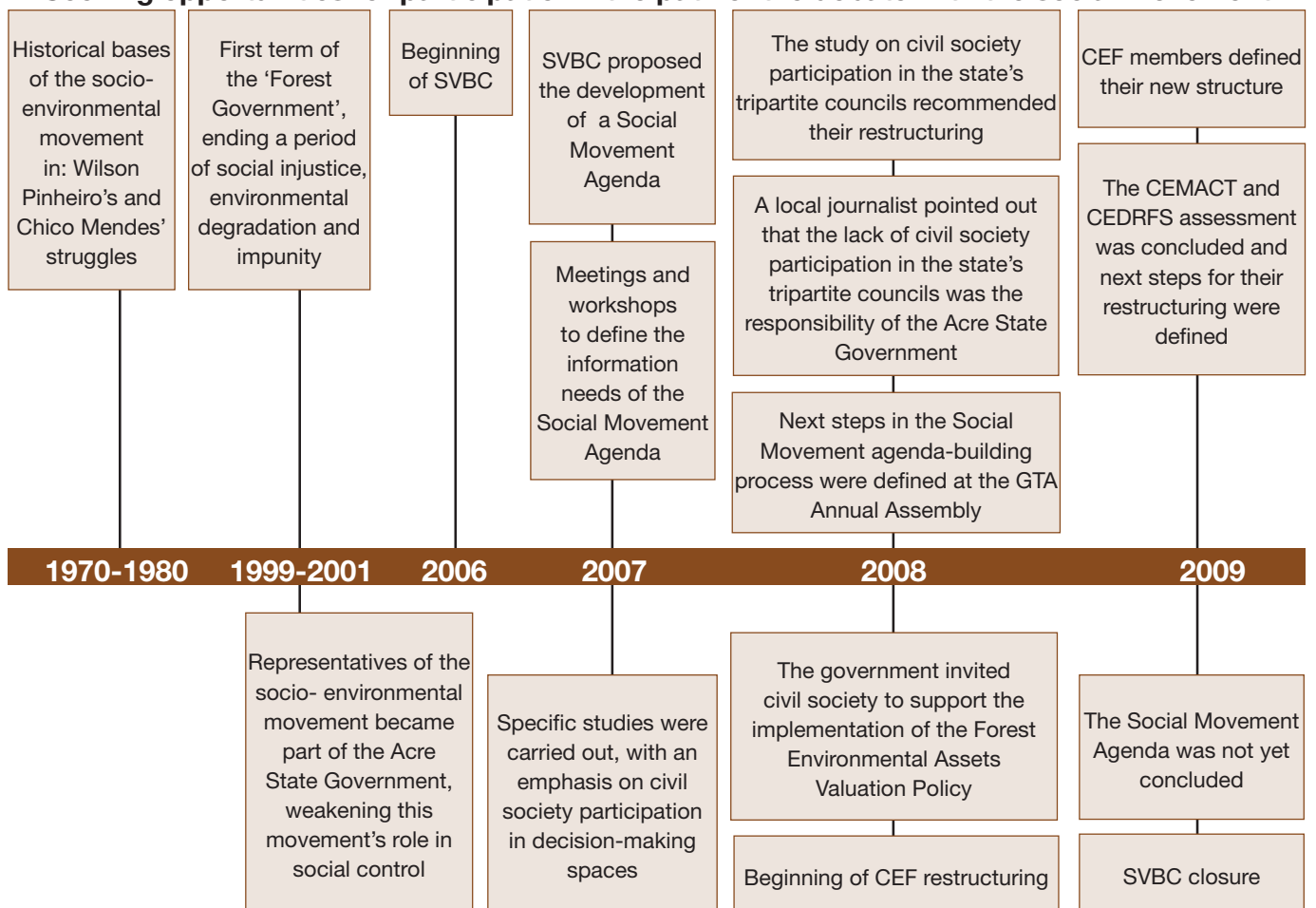
⁵ This is the name the Government of Acre adopted in 2000 due to its work in support of forest conservation.

the timber sector also strengthened the sector's relations with the government. The year 2008 was a time for meetings, seminars, training events, field days, fairs, forums with regulatory institutions, and the implementation of the PROCOMPI agreement – a cooperation pact signed by ASIMMANEJO, FUNTAC, WWF Brasil, IUCN, FIEAC, SEBRAE, Banco da Amazônia (Amazon Bank) and SEF in order to structure the timber sector's local productive arrangement (APL) in the Acre Valley region. Parallel to the implementation of PROCOMPI, IUCN proposed the development of the Multi-sectoral Agenda. IUCN, with technical support from Greenpeace, the Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV) and other partners, also established connections with the business sector and the government to develop a

'responsible public procurement' strategy. Their intent was to get the government (the largest consumer of wood in the state) to commit to purchasing legal timber. Several factors made difficult that action, such as the initially fragile articulation of the institutions involved in promoting the idea with the timber sector, and the government's difficulty in prioritizing the preparation and approval of the decree. The process has moved forward gradually as relations between the timber sector and the government have matured. In March 2009, the signing of the responsible public procurement decree (No. 4007/09) strengthened the work of the Multi-sectoral Agenda and represented an important step in the strategy to respond to the strong desire of the sector to ensure a local

market for legal wood. In April an agenda consolidation workshop was held with the actors, at which the main factors limiting entrepreneurial timber production and proposals to overcome them were discussed, refined and legitimized. The Multi-sectoral Agenda was launched in May 2009, during the First Responsible Timber Procurement Seminar in Acre. This is a story of change in progress, of many achievements, but also of many demands that need to be addressed. Dialogue and cooperation among the actors have been the main vehicles to achieve the desired changes. Also, the agenda plays a significant role – not only as a result, but mainly as a process – in the effort to bring the actors closer together and to ease tensions by seeking solutions through dialogue.

Seeking opportunities for participation – the path of the debate with the social movement



The Social Movement Agenda emerged as a result of a reflection by IUCN and WWF Brasil regarding the need to reactivate the role of the social movement in Acre. These institutions made contact with the Amazon Working Group (GTA), a network of social movement organizations in the region, to propose that a socio-environmental agenda be developed for the sector. It was hoped that this group would take the lead in articulating organized civil society.

GTA saw this proposal as an opportunity to identify the main obstacles to the articulation of the social movement and as a means to promote its strengthening. The challenge of improving socio-environmental governance – of how the socio-environmental movement can collaborate with public authorities and private initiative to promote natural resource management and social inclusion – depended, from the standpoint of the group that initiated the process, on the identification of strategic spaces for participation and on the restructuring of the form participation would take in these spaces. Thus, it would be important to diagnose the status of existing socio-environmental policies and their gaps, and to define key issues in which to intervene and attempt to have an influence.

Based on this alliance, and with the support of an external consultant, meetings and workshops began to take place. The idea was to carry out a series of studies to guide the development of the Social Movement Agenda. The focus and methodology of the studies were debated at two workshops with key social movement actors, and four thematic areas were identified: the participation of civil society in the state's tripartite councils, economic instruments for conservation, promotion of agroforestry production, and indigenous policies.

The study on civil society participation made significant contributions, promoted reflection, and mobilized the organizations. The consultant in charge of this study took on the task



of consolidating feedback from others, which was presented at a public meeting in April 2008.

The results of the study on civil society participation were presented at the GTA Assembly the following month. This provided a great opportunity for discussion of the importance of the agenda to the institutions in the GTA network. At this assembly, the idea of holding regional meetings to develop lists of topics for the agenda was proposed, but not put into practice. The coordinating group tried to focus the discussion more by proposing that only two regional meetings be held (for Upper and Lower Acre and for the regions of Juruá, Tarauacá and Envira), but this did not work either. It was expected that a strategy for coordinated action would be developed based on strategic themes such as forest management and sustainable agriculture. The following stages were planned, with eight days to be dedicated to each: definition of interest groups organized by strategic themes, definition of themes and proposals by each group, and development of the agenda. However,

this process did not occur since the identification of themes and agenda topics did not progress as expected. At the same time, the Acre State Government began a round of presentations to the social movement organizations on the Forest Environmental Assets Valuation Policy. CTA and Cooperfloresta took advantage of this opportunity to create a space for dialogue with the government on problems related to community forest management, and mobilized other social movement organizations to write a letter to the government demanding more support for this activity. Part of the group of NGOs involved in the debate wanted to take the opportunity to promote broader and more coordinated action, focused on discussion with the government regarding its relationship with the social movement. However, the group disbanded and did not resume the process.

An article entitled “Government promotes social disorganization”, published in the blog of journalist Altino Machado, created a moment of tension. Its initial impact was negative

due to the way the information was presented. WWF Brasil, IUCN and GTA issued an explanatory note clarifying that the article represented the journalist's interpretation of a technical and well-founded study with a constructive purpose. On the positive side, it led to greater reflection by the government and civil society on the relevance and effectiveness of spaces for dialogue and participation. Two government initiatives that were influenced by SVBC's actions are of critical importance to achieve the project's expected results:

- The launching, in September 2008, of the Forest Environmental Assets Valuation Policy, by the

Acre State Government (2007-2010 term of office) called for the expansion of technical assistance capacity to support forest peoples. The governor asked the NGOs to collaborate as service providers in the implementation of this policy by organizing and forming a Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Network (ATER), which could also contribute to strengthening these NGOs.

- The study on civil society participation in the state's tripartite councils recommended their restructuring and raised the possibility of merging the three councils that are directly related to forest governance

– CEF, CEMACT and CEDRFS. The consultant who carried out this study was hired in June 2008 by the State Forest Secretary, then president of the CEF, to advise on the CEF restructuring process. This effort was initiated in November 2008 and is still in progress. Based on CEF's experience, IUCN and WWF Brasil proposed, in 2009, that the secretaries of SEMA and SEAPROF also carry out the restructuring of CEMACT and CEDRFS. This was initiated in the second semester of 2009. The merger remains a possibility, but should only be considered after strengthening each council.



4. Building the concept of forest governance

The SVBC project centres around the concept of governance, which the actors directly involved in developing the agendas explored with increased awareness during the process of systematizing the lessons learnt. In these actors' understanding, the concept of forest governance is not something previously established, but rather it is shaped and exercised as the process develops. Also, governance strengthening depends on a number of fundamental aspects:

- **Sustainability**

- Greater sustainability (economic, socio-cultural, political, legal and environmental) of timber and non-timber production
- Legal frameworks with clearly defined agreements and responsibilities

- **Interinstitutional articulation**

- Affirmation or reaffirmation of a socio-political pact aimed at social inclusion and environmental conservation
- Coordinated actions

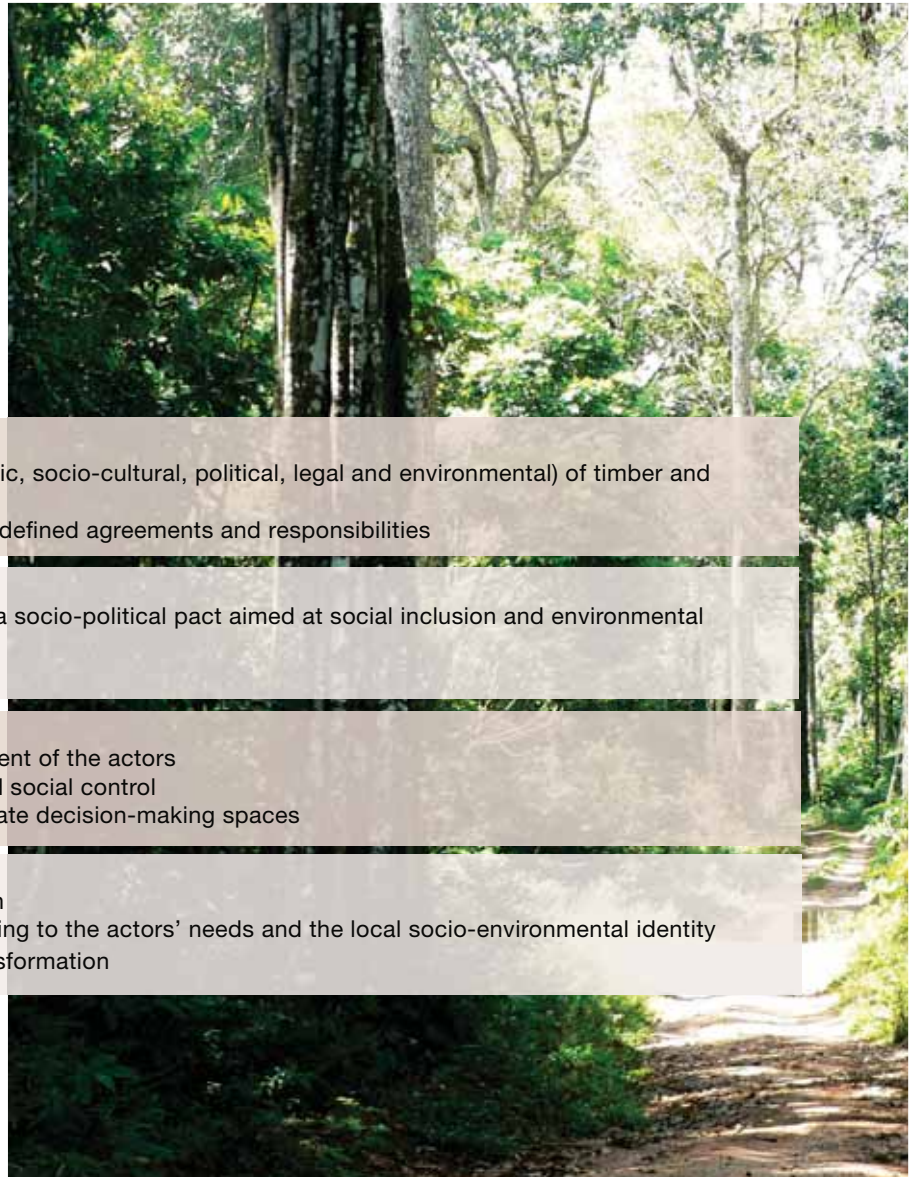
- **Participation and empowerment**

- Strengthening and empowerment of the actors
- Greater actor participation and social control
- More participatory and legitimate decision-making spaces

- **Information and knowledge**

- Democratization of information
- Knowledge production according to the actors' needs and the local socio-environmental identity
- A broader vision of social transformation

The lessons learnt about the process help to understand how, to what extent and why (or why not) the agenda-building experience contributed to these aspects, and to the strengthening of forest governance.



5. Lessons Learnt

Action-based learning has to do with changes in preconceived concepts and ideas which are redefined as the process evolves, resulting in new concepts and practices more in line with the context. Joint action learning is an essential element of governance strengthening activities since it allows the group and individual actors to adjust their actions and roles, and promotes the coordination of efforts and resources to support forest management and conservation.

Historical processes must be respected and valued.

Working on already existing demands provided a good foundation to begin the process. The proposal presented to the social movement to develop an agenda for the sector coincided with the movement's interest in enhancing its participation in spaces for discussion, development and social control of public policies and actions, and also with the movement's desire to institutionally strengthen its representative organizations.

Mobilizing the business sector around the development of its agenda was facilitated by the fact that part of this sector (also as a result of the SIM Programme) had become aware of the benefits forest environmental assets provided to their businesses and were already working with forest management. On the other hand, the

interest of the Acre State Government in combating illegal timber trade created an enabling environment for discussion and the presentation of proposals.

The importance of reaching agreements and pacts at the outset.

In order to effectively involve civil society, the private sector and the government in the agenda-building process, it is important to begin by identifying the actors' interests. The process must reveal and clarify these interests, because if they are not made explicit or sufficiently clear, this can lead to gaps and difficulties in achieving the desired outcomes. It is important for all involved to reach an agreement on what they want to accomplish with the work based on their expectations and fears/concerns. It is almost impossible to spend too much time during the initial stage of reaching the agreements and pacts on which the work will be based. Identifying hoped-for outcomes helps to plan, monitor and adjust the route to follow, as well as each party's responsibilities.

It is also important to understand that there are two levels of definition of goals and agreements. One has to do with the expected impact of the agenda-building process on the actors themselves (for example, the reactivation of the proactive role played by different sectors in society and the mobilization of the actors towards collective action).

The other has to do with the desired changes in the context. A commitment to these changes is a central part of the agenda-building process and must be based on a shared vision of the future. To determine who should be involved in each stage of the work and how to politically articulate the actions to be taken, it is necessary to map power relations within and among the institutions. Such mapping will reveal possible allies, resistance and any need to restructure the spaces for coordinating actions. This information can be used to ensure that formal political frameworks exist for dialogue with the different sectors in order to avoid excessive informality that might jeopardize the fulfilment of the agreements.

Bringing the group together around a central focus.

The agenda-building process brought together one or more sectors to work on a theme of common interest – which we refer to as a thematic focus. Coordinating stakeholder involvement in the development of the Social Movement Agenda was complicated by their diffuse focus on the various topics the process aimed to address. It is difficult to develop a unified process for a social movement 'entity' because the organizations comprising the movement are heterogeneous in terms of their visions of development, interests, focus

of action, capabilities and needs. One possible approach would be to work on specific themes, with specific groupings of actors and/or focusing on territorial considerations.

The fact that work on the Multi-sectoral Agenda had a more clearly defined focus (having the entrepreneurial timber production chain as a specific theme) and was centred on a more homogeneous sector (timber entrepreneurs) contributed to the progress of the work and produced more significant results.

Leadership roles must be defined and differentiated according to the situation.

In order for collective development processes to progress, it is critical to have credible mobilizing agents capable of dedicating themselves to the task. They may play different leadership roles – political, operational, process-related, focused on a specific theme, etc. – depending on their capabilities and on demand. The important thing is to create spaces where people can exercise harmonious leadership.

In the development of the Multi-sectoral Agenda, these different forms of leadership were assumed by people from some of the institutions that make up PROCOMPI. Although roles had not been defined and agreed at the outset, they were naturally assumed throughout the process, with help from PROCOMPI. In the case of the development of the Social Movement Agenda, leadership was divided and diluted among GTA's Executive Secretariat in Acre, WWF Brasil and IUCN, without the necessary clarity and agreements to carry out such a complex process, with such diffuse themes and such a heterogeneous audience. The fact that the GTA is a network did not ensure fluid coordination and mobilization or the continuity of the process. This was because a financial crisis, as well as identity crisis, hit the NGOs, weakening their articulation networks and making it hard for them to even define a common mobilizing theme.

Processes must be designed, implemented and adjusted according to the actors' needs and capabilities and the context.

Proceeding without knowing and/or considering the real obstacles and limitations and without taking steps to optimize the potential for impact may result in unreal planning and frustrations. In the case of the Multi-sectoral Agenda, it was critical to work through a partnership agreement (PROCOMPI). A positive feedback cycle occurred in which PROCOMPI energized and was energized by the agenda-building process. Clearly, it was fundamental to have an institution manage the process. Together with IUCN, PROCOMPI provided oversight for the procedures and multi-institutional agreements. In the case of the social movement, the organizations' main demand – the struggle for their own survival and the feasibility of obtaining financial and human resources to give continuity to their actions in a scenario of financial crisis – was not addressed by the agenda-building strategy. This is one of the reasons why the process did not progress as expected. More significant progress only occurred when new opportunities opened up space for dialogue between the government and the social movement, specifically





requested by both parties. This leads to another important consideration – the changing nature of the context and the ability to respond to needs that emerge along the way. It is important to have the capacity to constantly analyse the context and the decisions made (which must be consciously and responsibly shared) based on a balance between the needs, potential and risks inherent in the situation in which dialogue is being promoted.

This is the case of the proposals the Multi-sectoral Agenda presented for the review of the legal frameworks. The complexity of legislation and the continually emerging demands carry the risk of weakening these proposals. Many initiatives, especially those of small and micro timber traders, are still illegal. In the actions proposed by the agenda, there is an effort to seek mechanisms to assist in the legalization of these activities without having to change or break environmental laws. The search for this balance – solutions and alternatives to bring these activities back to legality without bending or misinterpreting the law – represents a great challenge.

The essential task is to harmonize interests and strengthen partnership relations.

The project was implemented during a period in which the Acre State Government made efforts to value forest environmental assets through a mosaic of strategies and actions aimed at extractors, indigenous people, and small, medium and large producers. They were developed based on previous experiences and lessons learnt by the government and civil society. In the development of the Multi-sectoral Agenda, the capacity to articulate and integrate the government sector's needs and capabilities with those of the timber business sector was essential to promote timber forest management and responsible purchasing. In the case of the social movement, the heterogeneity of the group and diversity of interests led to a broader focus on the capacity of the movement to participate in the tripartite councils, sustainable agroforestry production, indigenous policies, and payment for environmental services mechanisms. These themes are directly related to the government's strategies for the valuation of forest environmental assets.

Despite this broad focus, it should be noted that a number of more specific interests inherent to the context produced results in the process of developing the Social Movement Agenda:

- On the one hand, the government needed to: i) train the council members to integrate the councils' agendas for the valuation of forest assets; ii) provide public services through agreements with the state, for purposes of implementing the forest policy.
- On the other hand, the social movement's demands were: i) training for better participation/representation in entities that exercise social control over public policies; ii) training of new leaders who innovate their practices for intervention and use of forest assets; iii) strengthening of articulation strategies for dialogue or confrontation with other sectors of society (private and government sectors).

However, these interests were not considered at the outset of the dialogue and agenda-building process, and ended up being included later

at the government's initiative. The development of the Social Movement Agenda was too focused on the objective of producing a document containing the social movement's proposals. A strategy was lacking to promote relations and dialogue between the movement and the government during the process in order to articulate the needs and capacities of both sectors and strengthen the movement's relationship with the government.

Different interests should be expressed and integrated into a shared vision of the future.

The first steps in the development of an agenda, which provide a basis for consensus, are to characterize the current reality and define a shared vision of the future (what changes we want to

make in the context). Another important task that should be addressed at the outset is to resolve any tensions and conflicts that may exist among the actors and which could have a negative impact on relations, partnerships, the analysis of reality and consensus building. The very process of characterizing reality and collectively developing a vision of the future may contribute to conflict resolution. Thus, it is necessary to help the group identify their different conceptions and beliefs about the reality and reshape them based on facts that disprove biased perceptions. Such facts may come from within the group (based on reflections and discussions about the reality) or from outside it (based on existing information and studies or those specifically undertaken by the group, references to other experiences, etc.). It is important to ensure that the actors

take ownership of these findings in order to adjust their perceptions. The starting point for the development of the Multi-sectoral Agenda was for the participants to describe potential impacts, problems and proposed solutions, drawing on information from interviews with representatives of the business sector. The stage of creating a vision for the future did not take place, despite being an important step prior to the definition of change proposals. This approach facilitated the process, but also carried the risk of limiting the mobilization of other sectors in the entrepreneurial timber production chain, the broader analysis of the situation, and the development of consensus proposals that respond to the real needs and capabilities of each sector. To minimize this risk, an extensive workshop was held with representatives



of the business sector and of governmental, non-governmental and research organizations. The survey results compiled by the external consultant responsible for gathering the information were presented at this event. This workshop contributed to enriching the agenda-building process and to mobilizing the actors. However, new actions are necessary to define goals related to timber production, prioritize key issues, polish the action proposals, designate responsible persons, reach agreements, and establish monitoring and learning mechanisms.

One actor was absent from the development of the Multi-sectoral Agenda – the social movement, which fears that the inappropriate implementation of the agenda may deepen the inequality of conditions for community and business management. Involving this actor in the agenda-building process could bring to the table the visions and interests of the communities that work with community-based timber forest management, as well as bring them closer to the industry. The timber industry also has an interest in certified community-produced timber, as it adds value to their final products. It is necessary to create agreements for this value added to return to the communities. In addition, incorporating the communities' interests into the agenda can contribute to strengthening both the private and social sectors and reinforce the agenda as an instrument to promote sustainable timber production and the establishment of a political agreement aimed at fostering social inclusion and environmental conservation. The state councils, especially the Forest Council, are also entities where these interests and agendas can be come together and be discussed.

Participation is essential, but it is must be promoted and won.

Reactivating the proactive role of the private sector and civil society was one of SVBC's initial goals. The project



produced significant results in the former sector but still incipient results in the latter.

The analysis of the organizations' performance in the state councils contributed to this goal by revaluing them as spaces where actors from both agenda-building processes can interact and participate in the debate, formulation and implementation of public policies. This spurred the government-led restructuring process, which aims, among other objectives, to promote the enhanced participation of the actors.

Experience shows that council restructuring processes should be designed based on the expectations and needs of their members. The process should include a variety of aspects that are essential to the councils' effectiveness – legal issues, reorganization of the structure, definition of priority agendas, development of operating agreements, and training of council members, among others. If carried out with the participation of the actors, the restructuring itself becomes a training process for the council members and may lead to

their professionalization and to their assuming greater shared responsibility with full participation.

In the process of systematizing the lessons learnt, the following suggestions were made regarding how the social movement can improve its performance in the councils: 1. The councils itself can assist in this effort by bringing in specialists to talk about the issues under discussion and creating temporary commissions, with clearly defined deadlines, products and persons responsible, to promote stakeholder discussion and analysis of the issues; 2. Creation of a portal, which may be hosted by the GTA, to facilitate civil society participation in the councils; 3. Coordination prior to council meetings, including the preparation of proposed meeting agendas and the division of roles so that responsibility for overseeing each issue is assigned to the organization with the most experience in the matter. This organization must share with the others, in order to generate collective knowledge (provided that prior agendas are established and regular meetings are held).

With regard to representativeness, it is important for the different sectors to see their council members as their representatives or 'deputies', and to strengthen their involvement and demand results. The flow of information between council members and their constituents is essential, as well as the continuity of their representation (which should not be changed at every meeting). A complementary strategy is to encourage community members to participate as listeners at some key meetings so that they can take the discussion back to their communities. In addition, seeing the council in operation should motivate the community representatives to present their own lists of topics for discussion.

It is necessary to balance the constraints of deadlines and time pressures with the needs of the context.

On the one hand, having a project with a deadline is positive, but it can carry the risk of producing processes that are unrealistic for the context. On the other hand, excessively long processes tend to lose momentum. In any event, it is necessary to be clear about the milestones for the process and who should lead and be involved in each stage, in order to ensure the quality and legitimacy of the outcomes. Based on the experience of developing the agendas, the following milestones are worth mentioning:

- o Identify actors and opportunities for dialogue and shared action in the context of the intervention;
 - o Establish initial goals and agreements for the work to be carried out by the actors involved;
 - o Develop a shared vision of the current and desired situation;
 - o Prioritize the results to be achieved;
 - o Develop proposals to overcome obstacles, aimed at achieving results.
- In addition, when consensus-building processes come to an end, it is important to allow time for everyone to assimilate and take ownership of the results before they are disseminated in

order to avoid creating discomfort and broken relations that could jeopardize the implementation of the proposals. These stages only cover the development of the proposals that

will comprise the agenda. Their implementation opens up a new cycle that requires a process of planning, monitoring and evaluation of actions taken and learning.



In order to ensure the continuity of the process, even after the end of the project, it is necessary to conduct it in such a way that it fosters motivation, shared responsibility and the autonomy of the actors involved.

The agenda should not be an end, but a means to achieve a collectively defined desired outcome.

The development and implementation of agendas to strengthen governance and socio-environmental intervention is based on the assumption that the 'tension' between the current reality and the future goal, the changes and the results that are obtained, and the challenges and resistances that arise along the way are the driving forces behind the process of transformation and development of reality (made up of the actors and their context). It is a long-term process, the result of

which is not the agenda itself, but the objectives that the development and implementation of the agenda aim to achieve. These objectives are beacons that guide making adjustments along the way in the face of the obstacles and opportunities presented by the context. In the case of the Multi-sectoral Agenda, the main concern was to achieve the objective of developing the agenda, and insufficient attention was given to developing a future vision. Had more effort been invested in defining a shared vision of the future, this could have helped to mobilize the actors, analyse problems and potential improvements, and develop and prioritize action proposals aimed at solving these problems. In the case of the Social Movement Agenda, the process was adjusted along the way, and although the agenda has not been completed, the experience helped to bring to light the difficulties

the movement has faced in its efforts to influence public policies. No progress was made in terms of establishing strategies and developing new capabilities to enhance the social movement's relationship with public power. A reflection based on this observation is that the movement felt strengthened when it came together to provide a counterpoint to the government. But how can one militate against an extremely proactive government, in which part of the social movement's proposals became public policy? How do the organizations position themselves in this new scenario? These questions show the need for the social movement to redefine its own identity, which complicated collectively defining the goals to be achieved by the agenda. This and other challenges greatly limited the social movement's capacity to fully embrace an agenda-setting proposal presented by external actors.

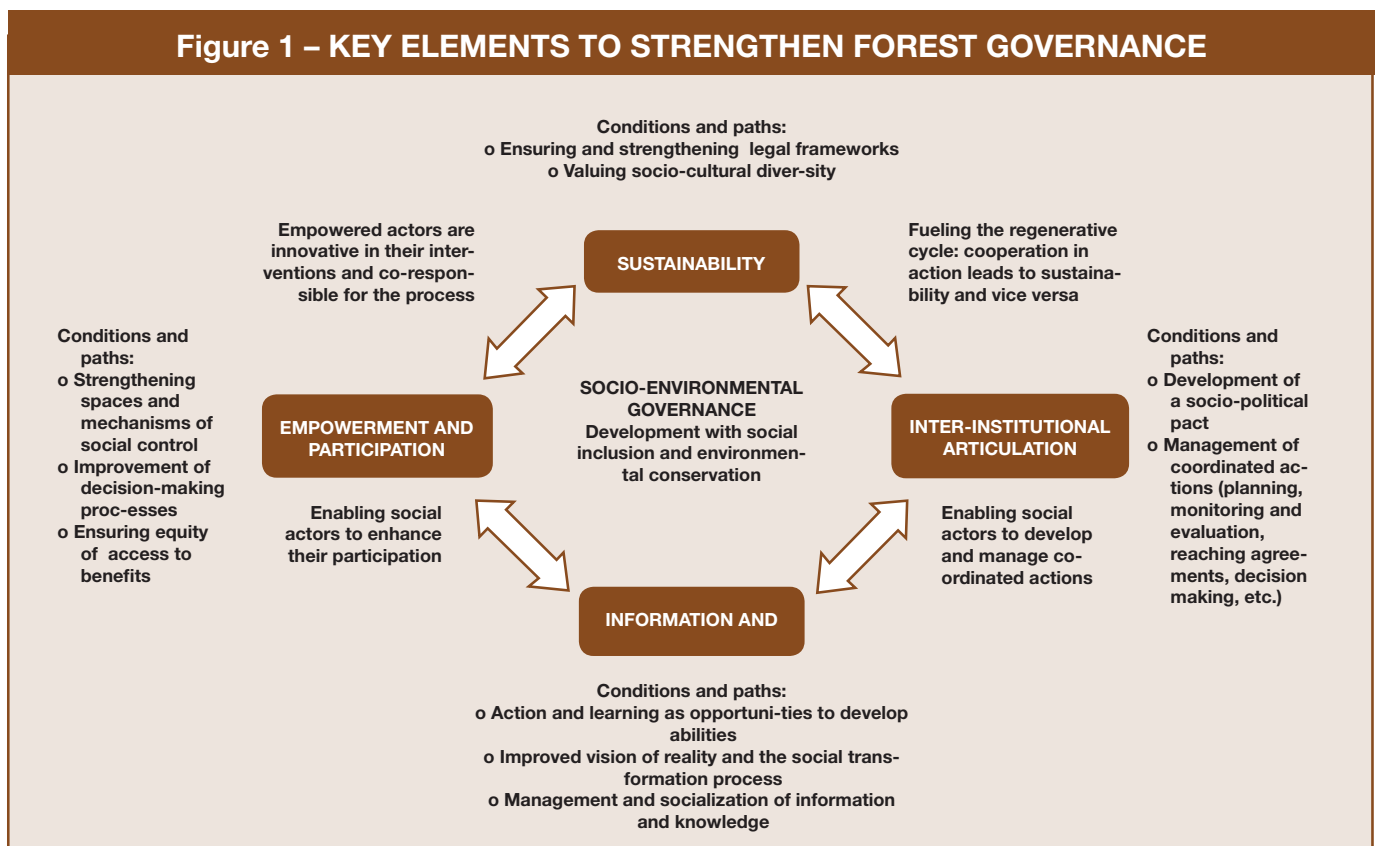


6. Key elements to strengthen forest governance

The strengthening of forest governance as a mechanism to promote development with social inclusion and environmental conservation requires that all sectors of society – government, social movement and private sector – act proactively and assume shared responsibility. Each sector has

accumulated experience and a key role to play, which must be valued in order to improve governance spaces and processes. These, in turn, should promote interinstitutional articulation, the generation of information and knowledge, participation and empowerment, and sustainability in its different dimensions.

These aspects constitute the basis of the concept of governance that was shaped by the actors involved in implementing SVBC in Acre, in the process of developing the agendas. Taken together with the lessons learnt, they allow us to identify the essential elements that must be ensured through forest governance, as illustrated in Figure 1.





as well as members of parliament, in order to develop, adjust and implement appropriate laws that meet the needs of the context.

The bodies that deal with these laws, such as state and municipal councils, need to be changed and improved in order to allow the actors to reach agreements and divide responsibility for the implementation and continuous monitoring of legislation.

Empowered actors are innovative in their interventions and co-responsible for the results.

A governance body or process is established and fuelled by input from the actors that comprise it. Thus, the quality of their performance determines the quality of the body or process, and vice versa. To strengthen governance, it is necessary to intervene on both sides. Improvements in spaces for participation and social control, when integrated with policies that ensure equity of access to benefits, create opportunities for actors from different sectors to be more proactive and innovative in their interventions in reality based on the different dimensions of the institution or individual: political, technical, socio-cultural, productive, consumer-oriented, etc. This contributes to the development of new approaches and new relationships that help to meet the challenges of the context.

The level of participation to be promoted in these spaces depends on the needs and shape of the context and on the capabilities of their members. On the one hand, it is necessary to work on their organization (structure, composition, agreements, etc.) and functioning (routines, decision-making, communication, planning, monitoring and evaluation procedures, etc.). On the other hand, opportunities must be created for the actors to develop technical and conceptual abilities, improve their manner of relating to people, and review their attitudes towards the responsibility and task of political representation they have assumed.

It is necessary to fuel the regenerative cycle – interinstitutional articulation leads to sustainability and vice versa.

Coordinated action based on a socio-political pact and a shared vision of reality and the desired future contributes to economic, socio-cultural, political, legal and environmental sustainability. This happens because it generates mutual commitment, brings the actors together to face challenges, and creates opportunities for innovation based on an appreciation of each actor’s capabilities and needs. And the more results are achieved, the more motivation there is to work in cooperation.

Interinstitutional articulation contributes to the production of knowledge and the empowerment of the social actors.

If the process of developing an expanded vision of the local reality, dreaming about desired changes, and planning and implementing shared actions is well managed, monitored and evaluated, it results in enhanced actions, collective learning, the production of knowledge, and the

development of the capabilities of the actors involved.

Each actor plays a different role in generating knowledge, and this must be considered and encouraged in order to create innovative and well-founded solutions. In governance spaces, dialogue and the integration of traditional (or empirical) knowledge and scientific knowledge must be promoted, and opportunities for experimentation by the different groups must be ensured.

Information and knowledge are essential to develop strategies for sustainability in its different dimensions. Sector-appropriate communication strategies and mechanisms must be defined and implemented by the different actors in order to facilitate the circulation of, and access to, information.

Sharing responsibilities for the definition and implementation of the legal framework.

Ensuring a legal framework that results in the effective conservation of forest resources depends on openness, commitment and the capacity for articulation between government, private sector and civil society actors,

7. IUCN's role in the strengthening of forest governance in Acre

A brief analysis of IUCN's performance in the SVBC project, in the context of the Union's efforts to support forest governance⁶ reform and strengthening processes, resulted in the identification of the following lessons learnt and suggestions to guide the direction of future actions.

Promoting spaces for dialogue and articulation

In promoting dialogue and articulation, IUCN may play the roles of adviser (contributing to the definition of the strategy and supporting the articulation process), facilitator (encouraging dialogue, bringing the group together, facilitating decision making, etc.) and/or funder (provider of material resources) of the process.

As adviser and/or facilitator, IUCN should be knowledgeable about the actors and stakeholders, their needs and capacities, power relations and existing conflicts, and

propose an approach that is appropriate to each actor's stage of development. Depending on the degree of articulation among the institutions, it is usually better to start with short-term goals, actions and agreements that can be readjusted as people, institutions and groups mature. Using this approach, IUCN should promote the gradual assumption of shared responsibility and ownership of the process by the actors involved. To accomplish this, a number of strategic and methodological aspects should be taken into account:

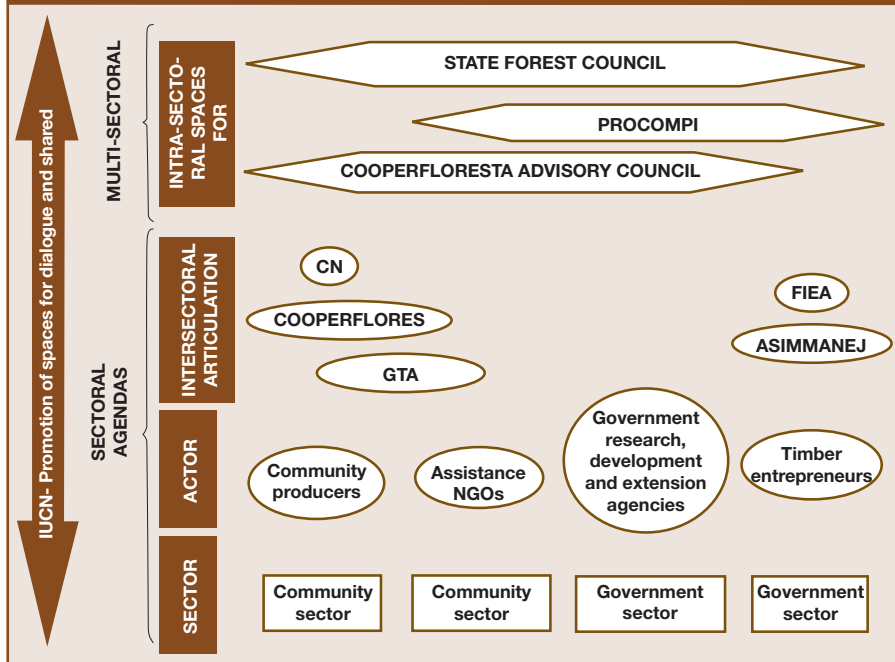
- The process must respond to the needs and desires of the actors;
- It is necessary to have a core group comprised of institutions representing the partners and beneficiaries of the dialogue process. Together with IUCN, they should reflect on the progress made and the obstacles to dialogue and articulation, gather lessons learnt, and identify the adjustments to be made along the way;

- This core group is even more essential when the proposal for dialogue and articulation comes from IUCN and partners that do not represent sectors that include the direct beneficiaries of the work carried out;
- Equity of access to benefits is a great challenge because the needs and interests of a particular sector are not always clear, agreed on or well represented by their leaders in the dialogue process and the development of common agendas;
- It is important to identify each sector's degree of articulation and, if necessary, to ensure that parallel dialogue and agenda-setting processes are carried out in different areas (in sectors, through intersectoral articulation, and through spaces for intra-sectoral dialogue, as shown in Figure 2);
- A good flow of information is essential to ensure transparency and trust among the parties and to keep the different actors mobilized.



⁶ IUCN. A capacity needs assessment process. Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC). Triraganon, 2009.

Figure 2: LEVELS OF DIALOGUE PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDAS AIMED AT FOSTERING A LEGAL AND SUSTAINABLE TIMBER PRODUCTION CHAIN



Contributing to knowledge and capacity building as an empowerment strategy

In the area of knowledge and capacity-building for people, groups and institutions, IUCN may combine different strategies. In SVBC in Acre, the following approaches were taken:

- The process of reflecting on the context and the development of change proposals increasing, among other things, the capacity to analyse reality, promote dialogue, seek consensus, and prioritize demands;
- Conducting of specific studies;
- Implementation of pilot actions for action-based training;
- Provision of specific training.

In the role of adviser and facilitator, IUCN should design and conduct a process that takes into account the following aspects:

- The agenda-building process should consider the desired changes in the context and the capacities individuals and groups need, which will be developed through a process of

dialogue and joint action;

- It is necessary to ensure adequate space and conditions for the individuals and groups that comprise the different sectors to take a leading role in determining the capabilities they need to implement the agenda;
- These capabilities should be identified by comparing the current situation with the vision of the desired future and reflecting on what skills are needed to implement actions to generate the desired changes;
- The capabilities must include those directly related to the desired changes in the context (for instance, specific technical capabilities for sustainable timber production and conceptual abilities related to the legal framework) and those related to the management of dialogue and shared action (for example, the ability to conduct inter and intra-sectoral processes for decision-making, planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning);
- The identification and exchange of complementary capabilities among groups should be encouraged and will

help them to appreciate the different actors' knowledge.

In general, specific studies are coordinated by IUCN and carried out by external consultants. Getting the actors to take ownership of the results is always a challenge. In order to meet it, IUCN must ensure that the following steps are taken in carrying out studies:

- Agree on the process of designing the study with the core group in charge of coordinating dialogue and articulation, and designate a person in charge;
- Define the scope of the study with the consultant and the stakeholders in order to ensure that it responds to their needs;
- Identify and confirm the core group of relevant actors to be involved in the collection of secondary data;
- Conduct semi-structured interviews whose questions allow the interviewed actors to reflect on and generate questions about the context – this is essential to generate interest in the results of the study;
- Systematize the information from a neutral point of view, focusing on facts about the context, not opinions;
- Provide feedback and discuss the information with the core group to determine if any information needs adjusting; this must be done by the consultant;
- Provide the actors with feedback in order to promote analysis and decision-making about the issue in question.

It is necessary to distinguish between the role of the consultant in conducting the survey, systematizing and providing feedback and that of the facilitator of the information analysis and decision-making process. Both tasks can be performed by the same person or not, depending on his/her abilities. When the facilitator is very knowledgeable about the topic of the study, he/she can use this knowledge in a positive way to formulate good questions that do not lead the group to answer in a particular way, but that help to deepen their reflection and development of a vision of the context before making a decision.

8. And the story goes on...

SVBC was part of, and contributed to, a story that was and continues to be written by many hands, setting some milestones and generating new lessons learnt to help meet the challenges continually faced by the actors in their context.

Forest governance is collectively constructed through reflection and articulated action by forest land use actors who are guided by a socio-political pact. The process of developing the agendas and systematizing the lessons learnt has helped these actors to take ownership of the concept. But the journey must continue.

The Multi-sectoral Agenda represents an ethical instrument for the business sector. Its development, implementation and evaluation strengthen the sector's role in forest governance and socio-environmental intervention, increasing the visibility of its actions.

The social movement faces the constant challenge of renewing, repositioning and reinventing itself to fulfil its historic role in governance. In the current context, this should occur based not only on the movement itself, but also on the opportunities that the government and business sectors identify based on the convergence of interests around an agreement for sustainability. Examples of this are the possibility of integrating the community forest producers into the Multi-sectoral Agenda and the experience (currently underway) of strengthening the state councils as

privileged spaces for participation and social control.

These opportunities may be led by one actor, but their success depends on the participation and co-responsibility of all stakeholders. While, on the one hand, the government could improve its dissemination of public policies related to forest management, on the other hand, the social movement should coordinate more to ensure the flow of information. Debate on issues of interest to a group of actors should be initiated and enhanced by the involvement of all

relevant stakeholders, based on reliable information. Two such issues include the social and economic outcomes generated by the timber production chain, and market access mechanisms and agreements for community-based and entrepreneurial producers. SVBC is over because the project has concluded: it had a time to begin and a time to end. But the journey will always continue. New relationships will be built that will give the different actors greater social control to ensure that “the forest belongs to everyone”.



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Annex

People and institutions participating in workshops and interviews

WORKSHOPS

Name	Institution
Adelaide Fátima	FIEAC / Asimmanejo
Alberto Tavares	WWF Brasil
Amine de Santana	GTA / RAHM
Doris Cordero	IUCN Regional Office for South American
Eduardo Amaral Borges	PESACRE
Fernanda Basso Alves	Consultant
Frederico Soares Machado	IUCN Acre office
Jairo Lima	CTA
Jean Paul Ledant	Consultant – External evaluator of SVBC
José Maria Barbosa	CNS – AC
Lázara Marcelino	GTA / RAHM
Liliana Pires	IUCN Acre office
Luis Meneses	Consultant
Luis Scheffler	Consultant
Marcelo Piedrafita	CPI – AC
Maria Jocicleide Aguiar	Consultant
Roseneide Sena	FIEAC
Silvia Brilhante	SOS Amazônia
Tiago Juruá Ranzi	MPE
Weruska Bezerra	PROCOMPI

Note: Some participated in both workshops, while others only attended the first or second one.

INTERVIEWS

Name	Institution
Carlos Ovídio Duarte	SEF
Eduardo Amaral Borges	PESACRE
Eufran Amaral	SEMA
Fabrizio Bianchini	CPI – AC
Marcelo Argüelles	SFB (former SBVC project coordinator)
Marcelo Piedrafita	CPI – AC
Maria Luiza Pinedo Ocho	CPI – AC
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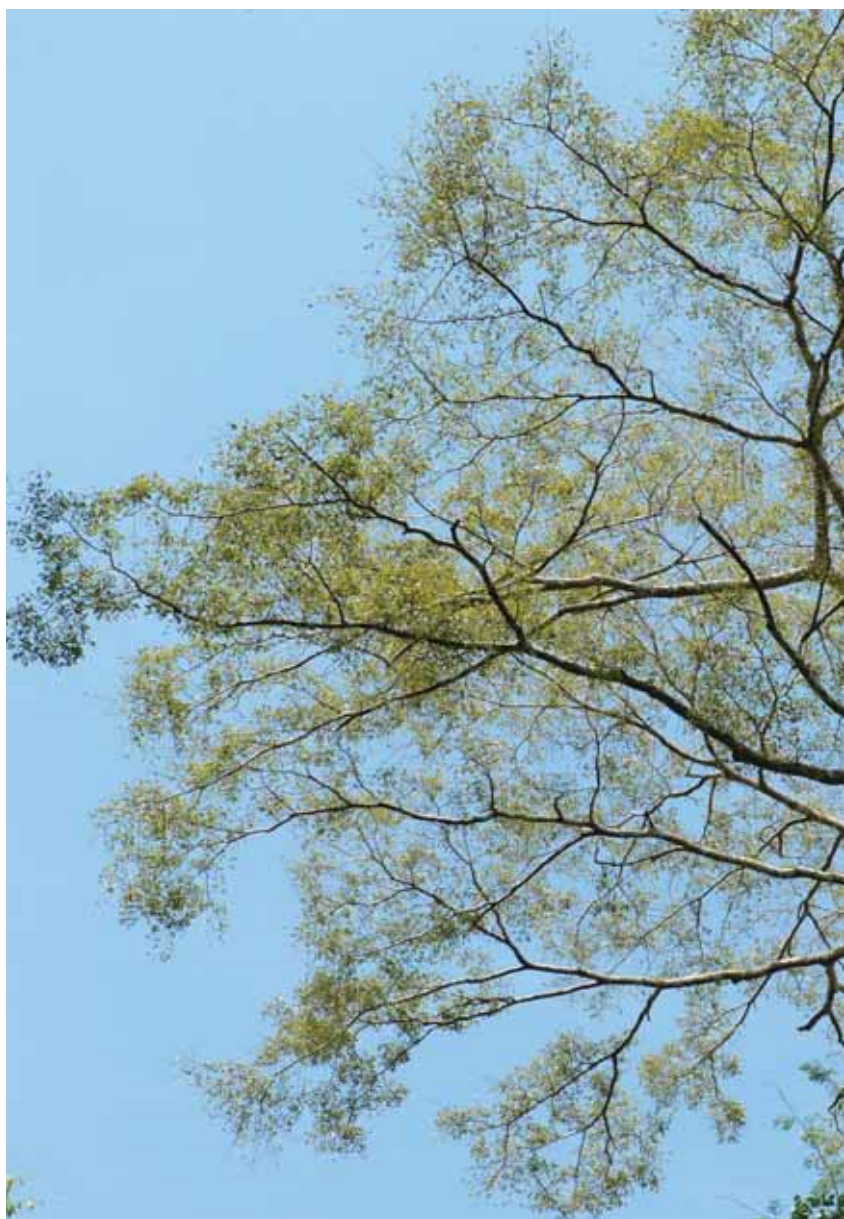
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