

Forest Governance and Communications under PAGE¹: Rationale and Strategy

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Recent evidence indicates that forest cover loss -- especially of primary natural forests -- continues at a rapid pace in some of the key forested areas of Madagascar.⁴ In response to the continued loss of this important economic asset⁵, the Ministry of Water and Forests (MEF) and a variety of national and international donors are working actively to strengthen forest management. In spite of these advances, much remains to be done. USAID has therefore encouraged its contractors and grantees to continue to explore models for reducing forest loss and improving forest management. The Environmental Management Support Project (PAGE) is a project designed to support the Environment Program (NEAP) of the country, and thus endeavors to contribute to improved forest management.

The purpose of this document is to explain PAGE's rationale and strategy for contributing to improved forest management. Comments on the current forest governance and communications program are welcome.

⁴ See PAGE report "Preliminary Report on Forest Cover Change from 1993/94-1999/2000 for Two Forest Corridors in Eastern Madagascar", July 2001, by Frank Hawkins and Ned Horning.

⁵ See the work by the ONE/CFSIGE/University of Antananarivo environmental economic case studies program, available at PAGE, also available in full at www.irqltd.mg.

A program intending to improve forest governance should begin with a review and analysis of the context for forest governance. That analysis follows below.

A. The legacy of a strongly centralized forest management system

While national forest policy has evolved considerably in recent years, on the ground, the system that prevails is generally the same one that was put in place in the 1930's during the colonial period. It is a markedly unequal system that gives power to the State and the benefits of forest exploitation to urban residents. The forest agent is expected to protect the goods of the state over and against the local populations, and is often the adversary of villagers.

Following this tradition, and in reality, the State is the owner of the forests. Villagers do not have rights to have access to the forests without the authorization of the agent of the state: the forester. Even the villagers that are motivated to protect the forest in their traditional lands do not have right to do it. The fact that the forest agent may not have the means, neither to control access to the forest, nor to manage it, often creates a situation of *de facto* free access. No real management of the forest is possible as long as access is considered free.

Traditionally, the Malgache forester has not managed the forest in the modern sense of the word. The forest agent typically confuses the awarding of permits and respect for forest rules, with forest management. Forest exploitation permits have never, or almost never, been delivered in relation to a management plan. Up to the end of the year 2000, not a single tree has been cut in a natural forest in Madagascar in relation to an approved forest management plan.

Forest producers are in almost all cases citizens of villages or towns, and are already relatively rich by comparison with local populations living near forests. Local populations receive very little in the way of benefits, although they may be employed as day labor. Even if payments are received by the Commune, they rarely return to the villagers that are traditional owners and managers of the forest.

Forest exploitation is also unequal in another sense: production of forest products, particularly charcoal, from forests is effectively a subsidy to urban areas from rural areas. The sale price of these products rarely reflects the real costs of production.

B. Internal Challenges to Creating a More Effective Forest Service

Forest agents, like all civil service employees in Madagascar, are very badly paid. What is more, they are often posted to rural areas where the living conditions are difficult (poor schools; limited health access; etc.). But such distant postings also create temptations for agents that want to exploit their position of authority against the local population. The forest is considered effectively as a police agent, and he grants permits for the harvesting of products of high value. Often, agents take advantage of such situations to further their own personal financial interests.

As a further complication, the MEF – since becoming a ministry – has turned exceedingly political in orientation. Permits are often granted with or without respect for official accepted processes. Regional forest directorships are openly granted to members of the political party in favor at the Ministry. And agents have little opportunity to call into question the work of their superiors. In such a system, the mid-level professionals have little incentive to respect the official texts themselves.

C. Gaps in Forest Laws and in their Application

There is a general perception that the forest law does not allow the type of forest management interventions necessary for good forest management. During the evaluation of 10 pilot forest management projects conducted in 2000, specific silvicultural techniques were proposed for thinning forests and plantations, and the reaction of foresters was often that such cuttings were “against the law”.

D. Lack of transparency in the granting of permits

One of the principal shortcomings of governance in the forest sector is the lack of transparency in the awarding of permits, especially permits for forest exploitation. Among the permits delivered by the MEF, the following can be identified:

- Forest exploitation permit – for commercial exploitation
- Cutting permit – for non-commercial use
- Clear-cutting permit – for the clear-cutting of natural forests so that they can be put into agricultural production.

E. Yet, a New Forest Policy Provides the Context for Improving Forest Governance

In spite of these problems with the legal framework, and with application of existing law, the country's forest policy context has evolved considerably in the last five years. Beginning with approval of the Loi Forestiere, Madagascar embarked on an ambitious effort to put an improved policy context in place. Two key Decrees, 98-781 and 98-782 also provide an important opening for governance as an important dimension of forest management. More recently, the MEF has taken steps to improve the context even further. A recent arrêté establishes national and regional Observatoires to contribute to improved forest governance. In June of 2000, the MEF committed itself to increasing the percentage of permit receipts generated for regional MEF offices. The Plan d'Action included as an output to the recent CFE negotiations (April 2001) include specific activities in support of transparency in the permitting process (public posting of permits at local MEF offices, etc.). In addition to these encouraging elements of the forest policy structure, the MEF is now discussing an ambitious and progressive Information Policy that will further support improved forest governance.

F. Lack of Awareness About Forest Law and Policy on the Part of Forest Field Agents, Local Government and Rural Populations

Although this new forest policy now has existed for several years, a considerable amount of ignorance remains concerning its content. Often forest agents are not even aware of the new policy, and haven't seen or read the actual texts of the laws and policies themselves. During a meeting in 2000 with

agents in the spiny forest area of the south, it was found that many agents did not understand the basic elements of the NEAP, the Environment Program, GELOSE, GCF or the new forest law.

G. Increasing Importance of the Province Autonomes

The move toward *Provinces Autonomes* also provides an important contextual backdrop for forest governance activities. While it is generally accepted that the new Provinces will have an increasing level of authority concerning natural resources use -- and the revenues that can be generated from them -- it is by no means clear how resource management decentralization will work. Were a Province willing and interested to assert and test their authority for forest resources, it would require a dialogue with the MEF.

The MEF, along with its key partners, is actively working to address many of the constraints enunciated above. A number of those key support activities are enunciated in this section.

With funding and technical support from MIRAY, the MEF is working with CI to focus on forest management transfer, improved strategies for forest control, information management and regional planning. Included in the effort will be work to: elaborate and disseminate GCF materials to all forest agents; elaborate and disseminate information about regulatory procedures (GCF, forest exploitation, GELOSE, etc).⁶

The WWF World Bank Forestry Alliance is another important activity helping to achieve the global goals of improved forest management. The Alliance expects to undertake a number of activities relevant to forest governance.

- Revision of the forest agent Guide
- Training of forest agents on forest policy; GCF, GELOSE
- An information campaign to stimulate local interest in GCF and the forest policy. This campaign is to be targeted to local communities and authorities, local NGOs and local development committees, as well as forest agents

The French Cooperation, jointly with CIRAD, is supporting the MEF in a revision of the fiscal regime for forestry. This activity will include training of MEF agents in the new fiscal regime, which includes in particular new rules concerning permits.

In the Autonomous Province of Tamatave, LDI has put in place a quadripartite agreement with the regional DIREF, ANGAP and the Provincial Government to support improved forest management in a select number of "zones sensibles", with an explicit effort to improve forest governance. The governance elements of this program focus primarily on the material capacity of the DIREF to monitor and police the targets zones and on the open sharing of information concerning transparency amongst the key four parties.

In the past five years, the resources of the MEF and their key technical and financial partners have been focused principally on two areas: (1) development of technical solutions concerning approaches for managing forests (e.g., forest management plans, processes for transfer of management, zoning of forest areas, financial management processes, internal MEF management processes, etc) and; (2) the development of a policy framework, including Decrets, Arretes and related policy positions. The focus on these two areas has been entirely appropriate and justified. Systems and policies need to be put in place to encourage improved management.

⁶ See CI note on "Elements de la convention MEF-CI: Appui Miray au secteur forestier en 2001", dated 5 February 2001.

Table 1: Grouping of Forest Sector Support Interventions by Target Recipient

Content of Support Interventions	Target Recipients of Support Interventions	
	<i>The Public (local or national)</i>	<i>The Ministry of Water and Forests (MEF)</i>
Forest governance -- Awareness and understanding of legal and regulatory framework, rights and obligations	PAGE with its partners CNOE and other NGO grantees ⁷ .	CI, WWF/WB Alliance, French Cooperation, GTZ POLFOR, etc.
Technical approaches to forest management	Apart from the MEF, there are numerous projects and institutions transferring technical forest management know-how to local communities. LDI is one important example, as are the CI, WWF/WB Alliance.	CI, WWF/WB Alliance, French Cooperation, GTZ POLFOR, etc.

PAGE's support to forest governance is distinct from all of these efforts in that our *focus is principally on the public*, rather than on the role of the MEF and other Government institutions. While these programs target the capacity of key Government institutions to improve forest management, we will attempt to ensure that the public, especially the local public, is well aware of their role. In this sense, PAGE is focusing on the stimulation of demand for better forest governance services rather than their supply, which is the primary focus of the partners mentioned above.

Relative to these two areas, however, there has been a relatively more minor emphasis on the role of the public in forest management and conservation. PAGE believes it is now critical to ensure that approaches and systems are in place to convey to the Malgache public their rights and obligations in the context of the existing legal and regulatory framework for forest management.

Table 1 above organizes forest sector support interventions in Madagascar by target recipient and by the content of information conveyed in those interventions. As shown in the table, PAGE hopes and intends to begin filling the current gap in engaging the local and national public in forest governance.

A number of activities support these governance objectives. The *Comite Nationale pour* Although there are very few programs currently under way on forest governance, there are quite a few actors working in the area of governance in general. Probably the most important among these is the *Comite National pour l'Observation des Elections* (CNOE). CNOE has been a leader in explaining to common citizens their rights concerning elections. Recently, they have expressed an interest in becoming more involved in forest and resource governance.

The ILU Project of PACT -- funded by USAID -- provides direct support in the area of governance, with a particular focus on making information available via regional centers and on improving the legal process. In the Ft. Dauphin Region, ILU works to support the *Commune Urbaine de Ft. Dauphin*, the institutional organization of the CRD, the institutional structure of select associations around the

⁷ CRS is developing a strategy which will have an emphasis on justice, but it is not yet actively working on such issues for the forestry sector.

Fanjahira forest, and the development of Plan de Developpement Communal with the CCD of select communes.

Transparency International of Madagascar, as its name suggests, works to improve transparency and governance in general, but does not presently work on the forest sector per se. A governance project of the UNDP focuses principally on private sector development and the capacity of the legal system.

PAGE's forest governance program is grounded in a number of core principles and assumptions concerning the forest sector.

A. Focus on the role of public in forest management

By "public", we focus on two broad groups. First is the public that is directly affected by changes in the quality of forests, and who feel the loss of forest quality directly. This group, which we describe as the "*local public*" includes those that rural population that live next to forests, and whose long-run economic livelihood may be jeopardized when forests become degraded. A second broad group included in the term "public" are those citizens, perhaps living far from the forests, but nevertheless interested in their survival, either for economic, purely environmental, or even aesthetic reasons. We call this group "*forest advocates*". Included here would be private sector foresters, urban-based environmental activists, or urban populations who also benefit from the survival of forests, and who would suffer economic consequences were they to be degraded.

This proposal for an increased emphasis on the public as key actors in environmental management is grounded in the overall approach of the Environmental Charter and the Madagascar National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP), both of which recognize that until the common Malagasy citizen understands that the environment is valuable to him or her, and recognizes also that he/she has a right to determine its long term use, it will not be possible to reduce long-term degradation. According to Madagascar's Environmental Charter: "Environmental management is jointly ensured by the State, decentralized government institutions, properly constituted non-governmental organizations, economic operators, as well as all citizens." The Charter goes on to state that: "It is necessary to support the participation of the population, notably via a reinforcing of associative movements, so as to complete or support the public's capacity to manage." In the mid-term evaluation of the EP, it was concluded that an increased attention needed to be paid to this aspect, and in particular on what the EP calls the "Reflexe Environnementale".

B. Focus initially on Commune leaders, Heads of Fokontany, and traditional community leaders

In order to alter health-related behavior, health projects typically target individuals as part of a family unit. We believe that bringing about a change in behavior in the area of forest governance, by contrast, requires first and foremost an emphasis on commune and fokontany leaders as well as traditional authority, rather than the common citizen.

This is done for a number of reasons. First, communes and fokontany have an important existing legal role to play in the authorization of forest management activities. They are supposed to be aware of and approve of permits, and of any proposal for a management transfer of forest blocks. Second, the subject matter to be conveyed concerning rights and responsibilities enshrined in forest policy is by no means straightforward, even when communicated in appropriate forms in Malgache. The messages, in a word, are much more complicated than those to be conveyed in the health sector.

Local government leaders are, on average, more likely to have a higher level of education and awareness than their citizens. We believe this relatively higher level of awareness will be critical to our ability to convey governance messages. And finally, as elected members of a local government structure, there is at least a democratic link between the commune and fokontany service to their populace and their remaining in power.

We might have targeted the average rural citizen for this forest governance effort. Indeed, they will receive information from the program, but we believe it is more appropriate to involve them via local leaders, at least in a first phase of the governance program, rather than trying to get messages to them directly. Such an approach empowers local government leaders, and also enables efficiencies in message delivery, since the PAGE focus remains on a much smaller group of actors.

Indeed, there are other key potential target groups for forest governance messages and awareness. The gendarmes, the courts, other technical line ministries -- all need to have a sufficient awareness of forest laws and regulations if the system is to work. But PAGE believes that the primary focus at present must be local government, and particularly local elected and traditional leaders.

C. Link improved forest governance as closely as possible to sustainable forest management

The value of engaging the public in governance of forest resources has been demonstrated in numerous countries. A recent review of environmental sustainability in 30 countries in *The Economist* concluded that:

A striking result is that the variable with the greatest correlation with greenery is corruption: the less corrupt a country is, whatever its income level, the more likely it is to score high in the [Environmental Sustainability Index] rankings.⁸

We believe this conclusion applies to Madagascar, and in particular to the forest sector in Madagascar. And we argue that the MEF's recent bold steps to improve forest governance can have an important payoff for improving forest management.

D. Make information disclosure a key policy tool for improving forest management

There are other reasons, apart from the NEAP's emphasis on "reflexe environnementale", for PAGE to make a special effort to engage the public in forest management. It is becoming increasingly recognized around the world, and especially in developing countries, that Governments must find ways to tap into the power of the public and the markets to achieve their overall goals of environmental management. This is so first of all, because Government environmental regulators (of which the MEF is one example) are consistently faced with a shortage of personnel and of material. Faced with an enormity of tasks and relatively little resources, environmental managers (as well as government managers in other sectors, to be sure) have tested approaches in which they "use" the power of the public and markets to further the Government's goals. The US Toxic Release Inventory is one well-known example of an information disclosure approach. In countries as varied as Indonesia, the Philippines, Colombia and Mexico, a variety of information disclosure tools have also been applied.

⁸ "Green and Growing: What is Environmental Sustainability and How Can You Measure it?", *The Economist*, January 27, 2001.

PAGE believes that information disclosure is an important tool for furthering the goals of forest management, and one that should be tested via this Governance Program.

PAGE's Forest Governance program has been developed with one overall goal: empower the Malgache public to play a more informed and active role in sustainable forest management.

We intend to achieve this goal by pursuing the four activity areas listed in the table below. We identified each of the activity areas on the basis of assumptions concerning the forest sector in Madagascar. Those assumptions are listed in the table after each activity area:

Table 2: Major Activity Areas of the PAGE Forest Governance Program

Activity Area	Underlying Assumption
(1) Inform local government and local citizens (including businessmen) of their rights concerning the forests in their vicinity.	Once local citizens gain a better understanding of the regulatory context for forest management, they will have the confidence to play a more active role in determining forest use.
(2) Engage national and regional NGOs in a better understanding of forest management rules and processes.	National and regional NGOs and associations play a critical role in ensuring long-term sustainable forest management. They can and should play a key role in informing their networks about forest management rights and obligations.
(3) Work with the MEF to use public disclosure and awareness to help achieve long-term forest management goals, principally by helping to make citizens active and informed partners in forest management.	Because of limited resources, the MEF cannot act alone to ensure the long-term sustained management of forests. Already, the GCF Decree and the Action Plan of the MEF sets high targets for engaging the public. We aim to support this general initiative.
(4) Work with the MEF to clarify the link between a transparent permitting process and the use of revenues generated by those permits.	Until and unless the MEF can fund its regional operations via a functional Fond Forestier Regionale (FFR), it is not reasonable to believe that improved governance and transparency can be put into place.

To do so, we are pursuing the interventions explained in the next section.

In order to achieve these overall goals, PAGE's Forest Governance program includes a number of key characteristics and elements:

A. Focus on Two Pilot Regions

The Governance Program cannot operate throughout the country at the same time. Better to test and refine an approach in a limited number of areas that could, when put in place, be spread to other areas. PAGE has identified two regions in which it will target its support initially: Tulear and Tamatave. The two regions are selected for a number of reasons:

- *Generation of forest fees* : Taken together, Tulear and Tamatave represent nearly 70 percent of the fees assessed for timber licences⁹;
- *Varying national political importance:* Exploitation of forests in the Tamatave region is a more highly charged political issue than in the Tulear region, thus one region is a focus of much greater attention than the other. Tulear thus offers an opportunity, by contrast to focus on governance in an area of relatively less interest to donors and politicians;
- *Different levels of fee generation within intervention zones:* Although Tulear as a whole accounts for an important part of revenue generating capacity for the MEF, the initial expected target intervention zone (Ft. Dauphin) is of relatively less value for permits that the intervention zones to be selected for Tamatave, and in this sense also the two regions provide a contrast;
- *Already established local networks and initiatives* : Both Tamatave and Tulear regions include important local networks of actors that PAGE works with and through, including key USAID implementing partners;
- *Different forest types:* The forests of the two regions represent the potential for focusing on distinct forest types: dry forest in Tulear and the humid forests in Tamatave;
- *USAID priority regions:* Finally, the two regions were selected because they both fall into USAID priority eco-regions, in which PAGE attempts to target our support.

B. Within Each Region, Target One Well-Defined Intervention Zone

Within each of the two pilot regions, PAGE then works with partners to identify one intervention zone. These target zones must be small enough that interventions can be put on sound footing within the timeframe of PAGE. Yet they must be large enough to include a forest bloc of interest to biodiversity conservation as well as a convincing case for the replicability of the pilot activities undertaken there.

⁹ Niesten, Eduard, "Conservation Constraints and Opportunities in Madagascar", prepared for Conservation International, June 2000.

Although we will focus on intervention zones within the pilot regions as our primary focus, the governance information and approaches will be used and tested by others in the regions as well, and even by actors entirely outside the target regions. In Ft. Dauphin, for example, the members of the Regional Environment Committee are keen to use PAGE Forest Governance materials and approaches in their other target zones outside the one directly supported by PAGE. Two of the PAGE grantees, for example, are in the Fianarantsoa Region. We will ensure that they too are an active part of the network of NGOs that receive Governance communication materials and are requested to provide feedback/modifications to those materials.¹⁰

C. Integrate the Forest Governance Program and PAGE's "Reflexe Environnementale" Grant Program

PAGE's "Reflexe Environnementale" grants program was designed to support the activities of existing Malgache NGOs and associations that engage the public in environmental awareness and management. Each of the recipients work to develop tools to communicate with local citizens concerning their environmental rights and responsibilities. The grants program focuses in particular on three priority areas of: (1) forest laws/regulations, and in particular permits; (2) forest management transfer, in particular via the GCF decret; (3) public participation in the review of EIAs under the MECIE decret. As of July, 2001, PAGE had signed grants with seven NGOs, of which six were working directly on forest governance and communications.

PAGE's grantees under the "Reflexe Environnementale" grants program can be broadly separated into three categories. In the first category is the Comite Nationale pour l'Observation des Elections (CNOE). CNOE's role in the program is to be the leader amongst NGOs/Associations in the development of communications materials concerning forest governance for rural citizens. In this, PAGE will closely coordinate with CNOE, and PAGE will work to ensure that CNOE develops materials that are technically sound and politically neutral.

In the second category are those NGOs and associations that work in the Target Regions and Intervention Zones of the PAGE Forest Governance program. And in the third category of NGO/association funded under the program are those that receive grants for "reflexe environnementale" work, but are not directly supporting the activities of the PAGE Forest Governance Program.

PAGE will work to coordinate, as much as is possible, the interventions of its grantees under the "reflexe environnementale" grants program so as to ensure that:

- There are common elements to the approaches used for communicating information about forest governance
- That grantees benefit from governance materials development by PAGE and CNOE
- That feedback from grantees is sought during the development and refinement of these materials and approaches
- That lessons learned about forest governance are shared amongst grantees

¹⁰ LDI/Fianarantsoa has requested that it may both benefit from, and participate actively in, the development of forest governance communication materials.

D. Provide Technical Support to the Development of Communication Materials and Approaches for Improving Forest Governance

Working closely with MEF, WWF, CI and with our key grantee partner -- CNOE -- PAGE will support development of simple, Malagasy language materials and approaches for informing key governance partners. Materials are to be prepared in close collaboration with local/regional partners. PAGE recognizes that materials and approaches will need to vary by region. Our goal is to make available a palette of communication options for local and regional actors, from which they can pick and choose.

We work to communicate responses to the following questions:

- What is a "legal" and "acceptable" permit for forest exploitation? What should it look like? Whose signature should be on it? How can citizens tell if a permit is falsified?
- Where are the currently active forest exploitations in the target regions and intervention zones, and what are the terms and conditions of those exploitations?
- What should local citizens do if someone appears to be exploiting the forest illegally?
- What do the forest laws and regulations say about the public's rights to know about forest management? What is the public allowed to request from the MEF concerning forest permits granted?
- How can local citizens take a more active role in their forest management through the Gestion Communautaire des Forêts (GCF) Decret? What are the major steps involved in undertaking a transfer of forest management via the GCF Decret? Who are the key people to talk to concerning GCF?

E. Integrate Regional Pilot Support into Already Existing Initiatives and Institutions

PAGE looks for opportunities to provide this governance support in the context of regional initiatives and priorities. In Ft. Dauphin, we have placed our support in the context of the recently completed and approved Plan de Communication Regionale (PCR), led by the Comite Regionale pour l'Environnement (CRE). A similar attempt to integrate PAGE support into regional priorities is being undertaken in Tamatave.

F. Provide Complementary Support to Two DIREF on Establishment of "Regional Observatories", Transparency and the FFR

Long-term improvements in forest governance rest on two assumptions. First that information concerning who has forest exploitation permits, and other key elements of forest use decision-making, are in fact available to the public. As per its new work plan, the MEF has committed itself to posting of forest permit information on a regular basis at the level of circumscription. But what happens then? And is the information sufficiently detailed for a local leader to know whether it applies to him/her? PAGE hopes to work closely with the MEF, and in particular the DIREF/CIREF on putting into place the dissemination mechanisms needed to ensure that forest governance objectives are met.

In the end, the DIREF and CIREF must see some benefit from making an extra effort to encourage improved information sharing and local governance. One might argue that at present they benefit from precisely the opposite -- restricting information access as much as possible. We argue that the MEF must see some benefit at two levels: (1) They need to see that financial returns from forests in their region are in fact being channeled back to their region, as opposed to the present state in which they remain either in the capital or uncollected; and, (2) they need to have some incentive to

participate in forest governance activities, in light of their current low remuneration. Given current salaries and fees, they are hardly capable of purchasing a pencil, much less providing services to the public.

To address these constraints, PAGE proposes to provide the following support:

- Assist the MEF in putting into place the Regional Observatories designed to enhance the governance objectives enunciated in recent legal documents
- Work to assist in the establishment of financial systems via which the DIREF/CIREF can receive appropriate portions of financing from the FFN/FFR
- Ensure that the means are available so that the DIREF/CIREF are actively engaged in PAGE-funded forest governance activities

G. Ensure Overall PAGE Program Coordination

PAGE ensures a coordinating role for all these forest activities. The roles of this coordination unit include the following:

- Ensure that technical support is provided to CNOE and other grantees in the development of materials
- Coordinate with the MEF, and their various partners (CI, WWF, French Cooperation, etc.) to ensure that their work in preparation of Forest Management Guidelines is coordinated with PAGE-funded communications materials concerning the forest legal/regulatory context.
- Coordinate with other governance and communication program funded by USAID and other donors. Included would be ILO, PNUD's project on Governance, LDI, USAID's various health communications programs, etc.
- Serve as the spokesperson for PAGE when interacting with other partners at the national and regional level.
- Ensure coordination, as much as possible, between CNOE, local/regional grantees
- Work in the regions to ensure that PAGE support to governance/communication is coordinated with and integrated into regional communication plans

There are times when constraints arise at the local and regional level that can be best resolved through appeal to actors at the national level. A good example of this can be found in the delivery of "exceptional permits" (permis exceptionnelles), about which a number of actors in the Tulear region complained. It has occurred on a regular basis in that region that forest operators arrive from the capital with these "exceptional permits" signed by senior members of the MEF, which give the operator the right to undertake forest exploitation that is otherwise prohibited according to regulations. And yet regional actors in the MEF may be powerless when confronted with these "exceptional permits", given that they are signed by senior members of the Ministry. When such issues arise, PAGE works to ensure that such problems are quickly and diplomatically conveyed to the appropriate authorities at the MEF.

PAGE's Forest Governance Program is designed to deliver concrete outputs prior to the end of the PAGE contract. At the same time, the Program is designed with the thought that it will be picked up by other partners to be carried forward over the coming couple years. Communication, especially on issues as complex as governance, is a long-term process, and cannot be expected to show impacts in the near term.

Development of communications tools on governance will be completed before PAGE ends, and these tools and approaches will be disseminated via civil society networks. But PAGE is nevertheless aware of temporal limitations and is thus working on developing partnerships with key implementers that might be able to carry the Forest Governance activities forward in the coming phase. We are in discussions with WWF to formalize support to the Tulear/Ft. Dauphin Region, and will be looking to partners to carry forward activities in Tamatave.

We therefore identify a set of outputs that we intend to realize prior to the end of PAGE. But to give an idea of the longer-term trajectory and goals off the program, in concrete terms, we also identify the major impacts that could be expected in the year and a half subsequent to PAGE's closing.

A. Prior to the Closing of the PAGE Contract (end-March 2002)

i. Outputs: National Level

- Complete and well-document set of tools, instruments and approaches for developing and delivering key forest governance messages to local government in Malgache;
- Forest governance communications materials and approaches readily available to USAID implementing partners as well as other NGOs and members of civil society
- CNOE is actively engaged in forest governance as an additional target area of their mandate to build diverse civil society
- Funding is secured for continuation of the forest governance program

ii. Outputs: Regional Level

- In two intervention zones, well focused information concerning priority issues of forest policy and regulations are communicated to the local public in clear terms
- In at least one intervention zone, detailed information concerning authorized permits is released by the MEF and disseminated to local citizens in clear and unambiguous terms
- In at least one intervention zone, the CIREF plays an active role in ensuring dissemination of forest governance information to the public;
- In at least one zone, progress has been made in establishing the FFR as a functional mechanisms
- In at least one zone, a process for institutionalizing the Observatoire Regionale is clarified

B. Prior to end-September, 2003¹¹

iii. Impacts: National Level

- Dissemination of detailed information about permits is being actively supported by MEF
- At least one forest advocacy NGO continues to actively support the dissemination of forest quality information to its constituency
- Information about forest permits, and private sector forest exploitation, is being disclosed to and published in at least one newspaper
- Private sector foresters receive up to date information about the forest policy and regulatory structure

iv. Impacts: Regional Level

- Local citizen awareness of key elements of the forest policy and regulatory framework is improved in measurable terms;
- In at least two intervention zones and on four different occasions, local citizens have organized themselves to demand changes in the way forest management is presently occurring, with a recommended move towards adherence to the official Government regulations
- At least one Regional Observatory is put in place and functioning, and this Observatory regularly
 - Disseminates information concerning permits
 - Receives up-to-date information concerning changes in forest quality

¹¹ Assumes that funding is identified to continue the major elements of the program through the 3rd quarter of 2003.

Budgeted Elements of the PAGE Forest Governance Program

The following are the major budgeted items in the PAGE Forest Governance Program.

- Full-time Forest Governance Specialist (Francoise Ravoarimalala) based at PAGE in Antananarivo
- Full-time Forest Communication Specialist (Ahmad Abdillah) based at PAGE in Antananarivo
- Short-term specialists in communications and forestry, as necessary
- Preparation and multiplication of key communications materials
- Direct support, via the PAGE grants program, to actors in pilot regions and target intervention zones
- Full-time or part-time specialists in support of regional MEF offices (as needed)
- Support to DIREF/CIREF on the establishment of Regional Observatory and systems for management of the FFR.