



## Call for Participation from The Responsive Forest Governance Initiative – RFGI

### A Comparative Natural Resource Governance Research Program Supporting Resilient Livelihoods through Local Representation

RFGI seeks participation from researchers who can raise and bring their own funding to contribute insights from their ongoing research to the RFGI global comparative research program. We are seeking case studies from around the world to expand our ten-country comparative research program in Africa. Forestry case studies from any country are welcome. RFGI is studying local representation in the face of changing environment and in the face of climate mitigation or adaptation interventions. The RFGI funded Africa cases focus on the likely effects of REDD on local democracy. RFGI is a global program on local democracy and the environment.

RFGI cannot provide funds for your comparative studies, but we seek to entice interested parties to join our effort by developing case studies, attending RFGI research methods workshops, mid-term research meetings and comparative findings meetings. We can, however, provide letters of support to help you find funds to join RFGI. Participating researchers will learn from a global research team, obtain feedback on their research from the research team leaders and other researchers, and gain opportunities to engage in comparative research and analysis, and opportunities to publish working papers and journal articles. Deadline for applications is 10 November 2011. For more information see the RFGI [Programme Summary](#) (URL at the bottom of this file).

A project of:

The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA)  
International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC)

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Supported by: The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)

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The Responsive Forest Governance Initiative (RFGI) is a comparative local-governance research program that aims to understand the factors that *enable responsive and accountable decentralization* and *strengthen representation* of forest-dependent populations within local-government decision making. The research program will use its findings to develop guidelines for enhancing and helping to institutionalize widespread responsive and accountable local governance processes that reduce vulnerability, enhance local wellbeing, and improve forest management. Ultimately, RFGI aims to provide insights that help make forestry policy and projects, and in particular the UN's program for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) and adaptation funding that will be affecting forest communities, responsive to and respectful of local needs and aspirations. The project aims to understand the conditions that enable local government to play its integrative role in rural development and natural resource management by serving as the institutional infrastructure for the scaling up of local participation in public decision making.

RFGI research will be conducted in two parts. The first is called the 'politics of choice'. This research examines how central governments and large NGOs or institutions interact with forest-dependent communities. Which institutions and individuals do they choose as their local partners? What powers and responsibilities do they transfer to these partners? How do these central authorities intervening in forest management and use understand the effects of their interventions on local democratic process? This first portion of the research aims to understand the logic of policy and project intervention so as to best engage in guiding and improving intervening central institutions. The second aspect of the research is called 'the politics of recognition.' This portion of the research examines the actual effects of forestry policies and projects on local representation. It will study effects of forestry policies and projects on representation, citizenship and the building of a democratic public domain. Simultaneously, the project will explore the effects of interventions on sound forest management and poverty alleviation.

RFGI is an Africa-based program whose core funded research will be conducted in ten or eleven African countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda). A call for research proposals for these countries has been distributed and is available on the CODESRIA web site.<sup>2</sup> The program will openly include researchers from other countries in Africa and other regions of the world to participate in the program to enhance RFGI's comparative scope and to broaden its geography policy relevance. The program will be organized around three meetings that bring together its research teams from around the world. The first is a methods meeting in the fall of 2011, the second is a mid-research meeting in the spring of 2012 and the third is a final research findings meeting to be held in late summer of 2012. These meetings will be followed by a guided analysis and writing periods for the research teams. The project will systematically train young in-country policy researchers and analysts to help build an Africa-wide and worldwide network of new-generation environmental-governance policy analysts.

Qualified researchers wishing to participate in RFGI with their own comparative research will be invited to attend the three RFGI meetings, and their resulting working papers will be considered for inclusion in the RFGI publication series. **To participate, researchers must apply to the program and bring their own funding. RFGI does not have support for participants from outside of the African countries listed above.**

We expect that participating researchers will be already far advanced within their own research on natural resource governance in their country of focus. Once accepted, the RFGI team will write a

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<sup>1</sup> RFGI: Call for Social Science Research Candidates (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Uganda and Mozambique) can be found at <http://www.codesria.org/spip.php?article1452>.

<sup>2</sup> RFGI: Call for Social Science Research Candidates (Cameroon, DRC, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, and South Sudan) can be found at <http://www.codesria.org/spip.php?article1453>.

support letter to prospective researchers and ask that the researcher seek funding for their participation within the program. The cost of participation will include round-trip tickets, food and lodging for three research meetings in Africa and support for your field research within your home country. We estimate that a grant of 15,000 - 20,000 Euros would cover all expenses—3K for attendance at each research meeting, 2K honorarium and 3-6K for supplementary field research within your own country. The RFGI team will provide accepted researchers with research protocols, methods training, access to our research meetings, and feedback on your research report.

#### Estimated per researcher Cost of Parallel Participation in RFGI

Activity	Estimated Cost (Euros)
Supplementary Field Research (transport to and from field site and per diem support while there) if needed	Up to 6,000
Participation in 3 RFGI Research meetings – Methods, Mid-term, Final (3K each) for food, lodging and transport to and from	9,000
Participation in IASC 2012 Global Conference to present findings in a series of RFGI panels	3,000
Honorarium	2,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>12,000 to 20,000</b>

#### Provisionary Key Dates

1. RFGI Research Methods meeting (Dakar): 9-13 January 2012
2. 1st 3-month Field Work Period
3. Mid-term Field Research Progress Workshop (location to be assigned): Spring 2012
4. 2nd 3-month Field Work Period
5. Research Findings Meeting (Location and dates TBA).

#### To Apply

Please send a letter of request to RFGI detailing:

1. A cover letter explaining your motivation to participate in RFGI, the background you bring to the research, and how RFGI can support your search for funding.
2. Your proposed case study—two pages.
  - a. Please describe the case study,
  - b. Please describe your research methods,
  - c. Please describe the data you have in hand and how much field work you already have in this field site,
  - d. Please also include one or two of your own research questions and hypotheses that you would hope to explore through this research.
3. How your case contributes to the objectives of RFGI—up to one page.
4. Your CV
5. Two single-authored writing samples.
6. Copies of two published articles if you have published.
7. The names and e-mail addresses of three people who can write you an informed letter of recommendation. Do not ask your referees to send letters. They will be requested by RFGI.

**Up to 6 Case Studies will be selected from among the applications.**

Send your letter to: [Jesse.ribo@gmail.com](mailto:Jesse.ribo@gmail.com) by 10 November 2011

Please specify in the subject line: "RFGI Self-funded Participation Request."

Program description:

[http://www.beckman.illinois.edu/strategic/files/RFGI\\_Programme\\_Summary\\_and\\_Introduction.pdf](http://www.beckman.illinois.edu/strategic/files/RFGI_Programme_Summary_and_Introduction.pdf)



## **Annex A: RFGI RESEARCH PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION**

The research Phase of RFGI, years 1-3, is dedicated to understanding the democracy effects of climate-related forestry policies and projects such as UN REDD (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) and climate adaptation support. The research should illuminate how these interventions strengthen or weaken local democracy. More specifically we will focus on how these interventions affect the representation of local populations in decisions about the management and use of resources they depend on.

The research will use what we call a ‘choice and recognition’ framework. Higher-scale intervening agents, such as governments, international agencies, and large NGOs, make many ‘*choices*’ about which local actors they will engage with and how they will engage with them. The choice by higher-scale intervening agents of the local institutions to ‘*recognize*’, that is to partner with or to empower them, shapes three dimensions of local democracy: representation, citizenship, and the public domain.

RFGI will study the logic behind local ‘institutional choices’ by these intervening agents so that we can best understand why they choose to support or circumvent local democratic processes. RFGI will study the effects of these choices – that is the effects of ‘recognition’ of different kinds of local institutions – so as to understand how those choices shape democracy outcomes. *Knowing why* particular choices are being made helps to us relate their outcomes back to the project and policy design process. *Understanding their effects* helps to identify approaches most likely to strengthen local democracy while serving the needs of local people and broader developmental objectives.

The RFGI research will be used to develop guidelines for the implementation of climate-related policies, such as REDD and adaptation interventions, that will have an effect in the forestry sector. In the later part of the RFGI, the research teams will help to develop the guidelines and to test their effectiveness as they are piloted by practitioners. Researchers’ main role in RFGI is to help us understand 1) the dynamics of decision making by those larger scale actors that are making and implementing forestry policy, and 2) the effects of these decisions on local representation in forestry decision making. The research phase of RFGI is two years. The first fourteen months is dedicated to the primary research on choice and recognition. The remaining ten months will focus on developing and testing of RFGI guidelines.

A full description of the RFGI programme is available at:

[http://codesria.org/IMG/pdf/RFGI\\_Summary\\_and\\_Introduction\\_All\\_clean.pdf](http://codesria.org/IMG/pdf/RFGI_Summary_and_Introduction_All_clean.pdf).