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Presentations	Session 8.1	<i>Small-scale forest policy and institutions: review and cases from the Global South.</i>

Abstract Session 8.1 – Organizational governance of forestry cooperatives: Global systematic review and empirical insights.

Small-scale forest farmers play an increasing role to supply the ever-increasing demand of timber material for the wood-based sector. Forestry cooperatives (FCs), as an enterprise-oriented social organization, serve as a mechanism to mobilize rural smallholders. Our research aims to assess the governance of FCs that mobilize resources and commercialize wood products from smallholders. We employed a forest governance assessment framework, focusing on the participation, transparency and accountability variables. We conducted a systematic review and complemented insights with two case studies of primary FCs in Ethiopia and Vietnam. The empirical cases were purposively selected due to their being well-experienced in each study area.

The systematic search yielded 34 case studies of FCs from 13 countries operating for small-scale farmers. The sample exemplified five types of organizational structure of primary FCs, reflecting the extent of democratic decision-making and the dynamics between committee and regular members as key stakeholders. The sampled FCs (61%) indicated the manifestation of participation through the General Assembly. Conflict resolution mechanisms and measures to maintain transparency and accountability were stipulated in the by-laws or integrated into a local institution. Being part of a union body (38%) posed an advantage that primary FOs shall exercise transparency and accountability in reporting their performances.

Empirical data of two primary FCs, the Ethiopian Tiret-lediget and Vietnamese Phu Hung, complemented the review findings. In both cases, a by-law existed to stipulate rules and benefit sharing mechanisms. However, they faced challenges of the low accounting and management skills required in ensuring transparency and accountability. Being a member of the FC union (Ethiopia)/timber producer association (Vietnam) has the potential to bridge these challenges. Lessons learned from the synthesis and entry points for FC-related future research were derived.

Keywords: Forestry cooperative, Governance assessment, Small-scale forestry, Vietnam, Ethiopia

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