Rights and Resources Initiative

2012 Independent Monitor's Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) was launched in 2005, its leadership developed a case for support outlining what the Initiative hoped to achieve during the first five years of its existence and how it would fulfill those ambitious goals. That Framework Proposal was successful in attracting sufficient resources to RRI to make possible the implementation of a significant part of that original concept.

2012 was the final year in that first Framework Proposal period. This year, RRI was charged with implementing a full year of actions geared toward advancing forest tenure reform globally, as well as finalizing an ambitious strategic assessment process that, while affirming many of the key concepts in the original case for support, also challenged the Initiative to explore some very significant changes.

This report is the fifth in a series of Independent Monitoring reports on RRI's progress toward its stated objectives. In essence, the Independent Monitor is an external consulting team responsible for reviewing data concerning the Initiative's progress gathered, organized and presented by various RRI constituencies (especially RRG staff). The IM Team selectively validates that data and presents conclusions and recommendations based on that analysis.

The current report summarizes the findings of that review. In it, the IM Team is able to affirm that RRI achieved notable progress in several areas. Among these points of progress, the report highlights:

- RRI contributions to important advances in the process of pro-community tenure reform in Lao/People's Democratic Republic;
- The launch of a collaborative research project designed to establish a forest-tenure baseline in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- Critical support for successful advocacy of important regulatory changes involving the recognition of the rights and the economic importance of community pitsawyers in Liberia;
- Work to analyze and confront the social and economic impacts of the expansion of plantation-based, oil palm cultivation; also in Liberia
- The final decision by the Nepalese government, based on pressure from the RRI country platform and other civil society actors, to withdraw proposals that would have seriously eroded the historic gains of the community forestry movement there;
- Persistent leverage by members of the RRI civil society platform in Indonesia in order to move forward negotiations on the "roadmap" to the recognition of the tenure rights of indigenous and other forest communities in that country;
- Effective communications work around Rio + 20 highlighting the tenure reform contributions of RRI network participants and projecting the unique elements of the network's reform perspective;
- The publication and broad dissemination of "What Rights?" the newest in a series of highly influential RRI documents and other outputs analyzing the state of forest tenure, globally;

- The establishment and advocacy of an RRI public position regarding accelerating large-scale land acquisitions, especially in Africa;
- Deepening of strategic ties with organizations and networks—most notably, the Oxfam International network—engaged in analysis and advocacy work related to climate change and non-forest resource rights;
- The development of dialogue with key staff in select conservation organizations concerning the importance of the human rights framework, and, hence, tenure rights, to successful conservation practice;
- The consolidation of proposals for adjustments to the Initiative's strategic approach and meetings in Bangkok and Washington to discuss exploration of those "New Directions;"
- The integration of RRI Collaborators in both regional and global planning activities in recognition of the increasing leadership provided by those organizations to RRI's country-level interventions; and
- The negotiation of agreements with donor organizations and the opening of new discussions with additional donors regarding financial support for RRI's ongoing work in Framework Period II.

Each of these achievements emerged repeatedly in the IM Team's research on the year's activities, and marks an important step toward tenure reform and/or toward RRI's development of capacity to advance tenure reform. Many were explicitly contemplated in RRI's multi-level planning exercises, but some were "unplanned" in that sense, and, therefore, not fully addressed in the Initiative's monitoring outputs.

Amidst these achievements, there were areas in which RRI hoped to make greater progress than was possible in 2012. For example, while the Initiative has continued to prioritize support for the development of alternative tenure enterprise models (ATEMS), it has yet to discover the formula that will allow it to move this work forward on the scale that it would like to achieve. Important collaborations exist with outside organizations such as the University of British Columbia, and RRI Partners, particularly RECOFTC, implement important ATEMS-related projects, but the added value promised on this critical issue has yet to materialize to the degree anticipated.

Of particular interest to the IM Team during 2012 was the process leading to the identification of a number of "New Directions" for the Initiative. In general, it is extremely difficult for any organization, especially a network as complex as RRI, to achieve a truly self-reflective posture vis a vis its own strategic orientation. RRI achieved this, at least at the leadership level, through internal discussions of the obstacles to continued success in its work. These discussions were powerfully supplemented by the "Blue Sky" process, which culminated in early 2012. The Blue Sky discussions brought together leading thinkers and activists from myriad perspectives to reflect on RRI's past achievements, as well as the shortcomings of its perspectives.

This process resulted in RRG's identification of what the IM considers to be three potentially very significant "New Directions." These include:

- A reconsideration of the Initiative's relationship to the corporate private sector that manages to reflect apparently contradictory perceptions of that sector as (1) a primary driver of deforestation through its direct productive activities and ineffective supply chain management, and (2) a possible source of resources and political support for local and national-level actions to promote tenure reform and protect forest ecosystems in ways that lessen the risk associated with private sector investment projects;
- A serious exploration of strategic alliances with those individuals, organizations and networks committed to the broader agenda of community land tenure reform and a concomitant examination of the hazy interface between forest tenure reform and broader land reform issues; and
- A sharpening of RRI's existing commitment to critically examine and adjust its tenure reform efforts from a gender perspective, with a desire to see tenure reform advance the human rights of women, as well as men, and thereby unleash the power of women and their organizations in the service of further and deeper reforms.

In addition, as part of the New Directions discussion, RRG identified two lines of intervention that the IM Team considers strategies to consolidate these New Directions. These are:

- The exploration of the possibility of creating a mechanism—a "facility"—that would clarify and harmonize the tenure reform interests of key private and public sector actors, while achieving a positive connection between those financial and policy interests and multi-dimensional, pro-community forest management and governance interventions at the local level; and
- An examination of the feasibility of a global summit on community land tenure issues co-sponsored by RRI and a range of other key actors in the community land tenure reform and forest tenure reform sectors.

Conspicuously absent was a dynamic new strategy that would provide impulse to the gender-related new direction in the way that the facility and the global summit might advance the other two primary New Directions.

RRG organized a discussion of these challenging new ideas with a number of RRI Partners in Bangkok in April in 2012 and achieved agreement on continuing exploration of the feasibility and implications of these shifts. Then, in November, RRG facilitated the Twelfth in its series of Global Dialogues on Forest Governance and Climate Change entitled, "Scaling-Up Strategies To Reduce Emissions and Advance Development in Forest Areas." A number of private sector actors participated in this dialogue which focused on ways in which a reconceptualization of the role of the private sector might contribute to such scaling up. The dialogue and the subsequent RRI planning events provided opportunities for a deeper engagement by RRI Partners and Collaborators in the proposed New Directions.

Despite everything else it was required to manage, RRG was able to lead a rigorous review of RRI strategy that resulted in some serious proposals for strategic realignment. By its nature, this

process involved uneven participation by RRI actors outside of the Secretariat. During 2012, important steps were taken to both deepen RRG's understanding of the implications and the potential power of the proposed New Directions and engage more fully the wider network in the consideration of these new lines of work. In 2013 and beyond, there will remain much to do to further explore the implications of these New Directions and, where feasible and appropriate, to develop strategies that will consolidate network support for these directions.

During the Initiative's January 2013 governance meetings, a member of RRG senior management remarked that, to date, the network's assessment activities, while achieving notable learning results, had overlooked the critical element of "how the coalition functions." While a serious review of internal process has never been part of the ToRs of the Independent Monitoring Team, each annual IM report has contained a number of observations concerning the functioning of the Initiative, and has occasionally recommended adjustments designed to fine-tune RRI's internal processes. That said, the closest RRI has come to a comprehensive review of how it functions was a review of coalition relations carried out by a member of the RRG Board prior to the 2010 review of RRI's Memorandum of Understanding. The report made at the end of that exercise retains great relevance.

The current IM report comments on the effect of RRI's effort to reflect the changing role of Collaborators by increasing the participation of key Collaborators in regional planning processes. The tepid reaction to those observations by some Partners and the tenor of the discussions between Initiative stakeholders at the aforementioned governance meetings suggest that a more comprehensive review of how the coalition functions is in order. This is quite natural, given that RRI has been at work for five years in an extremely dynamic environment. Nothing is more important to the continued success of RRI than the achievement of "right relationship" among its key constituent parts (Collaborators, Partners, RRG and RRG Board) and the adjustment of internal processes and structures to reflect this notion of proper balance among the roles of these stakeholders.

Since this is the last Independent Monitor's Report for the period of Framework Proposal I, RRG asked the IM team to reflect on the strength and weaknesses of RRI's monitoring approach, as currently implemented. In general, the IM team finds that the Initiative has developed its own internal monitoring approach, and implemented it quite consistently in ways that interface well with the Independent Monitoring role. The information generated by RRI's monitoring effort is providing useful inputs to management's efforts to identify appropriate mid-course tactical adjustments, but only as one of several sources of information that drive tactical decisions.

Understanding of RRI's monitoring instruments, as well as the overall monitoring approach, is uneven across the network. Those charged with providing key monitoring inputs sometimes do not have complete information about how the data they collect connects to other data sources and contributes to the overall RRI mission (and not just their ability to do their own job). More importantly, the timing and intensity of monitoring demands make them burdensome for some contributors, especially RRG staff. The signs of "assessment fatigue" are evident.

The current report draws a number of conclusions about the efficacy of internal monitoring as currently practiced that point toward both an effort to providing additional training to those engaged in monitoring and efforts to "streamline" the current system in important ways. RRG's own reporting on 2012 results suggests that such an effort to streamline the internal monitoring system is already underway. Perhaps most importantly, the report points to the need for stronger integration between the three "strategic cycle interventions"—planning, monitoring and evaluation—now being undertaken by RRI. Stronger integration will help RRI realize the full value of the very significant—and highly commendable—investments being made in each of these areas.

Recommendations:

As has been the case in previous IM reports, this report concludes with a number of recommendations for action by RRG senior management and the RRI Board of Directors. These include:

1. **Collaborator participation in regional and global program planning**

Partners, Collaborators, RRG and the RRG Board should all be playing planning roles that are appropriate to their role within the Initiative. One of the real strengths of the 2012 planning process was that it recognized the emerging role of Collaborators as drivers of the Initiative's interventions at the country level. Collaborators appreciated this opportunity to participate in discussions at this level, but some observers felt that the planning process—especially regional planning—due to the new arrangements. RRG should conduct a serious review of the innovations contained in the 2012 planning process, facilitate open discussion of the results of the review among all stakeholders and organize 2013 planning in a way that is sustainable from a resource utilization perspective, achieves all planning goals and recognizes the shifting role of RRI Collaborators.

2. **Long-term leadership development/transition planning**

In close collaboration with senior management, the RRG Board should initiate a process of leadership development/transition planning that recognizes both the vulnerability created by the high level of dependence of the Initiative on a small number of unique leaders, and the long-term, planned nature of successful leadership development and leadership transitions. This is a critical role for the Board of Directors.

3. **New Directions exploration**

The "New Directions" identified by RRI during 2012 represent a potentially transformative strategic change agenda for the Initiative. Management of the exploration of these possible changes must be the first priority of senior management, and clear processes and timelines must be established for the exploration of the new directions. Internal communications regarding the New

Directions will be instrumental to their success. All key network constituencies must clearly understand the status of each proposal at all stages in the change process.

4. **Comprehensive review of internal coalition relations and functioning**

The environment in which RRI operates has changed dramatically during FPP I, as has the availability of resources to the Initiative. As it worked to maximize its impact in this dynamic environment, RRI has made both technical and adaptive changes to internal processes in hopes of increasing its effectiveness. The cumulative effect of these adjustments has been gradual shifts in key relationships within the Initiative and the division of labor and responsibility among the Initiative's constituent parts. After five years of mindful tinkering in a dynamic environment, it is appropriate to take stock of emerging structural relationships among key coalition players, to identify the desired roles of key coalition stakeholders and the optimal relationships among those stakeholders and to assess the extent to which current internal processes are supporting the emergence of that "right relationship" among the key components of the coalition.

5. **DRC program development**

Given the size of the DRC, the immensity of its forest cover and the country's strategic importance to forest tenure reform on the African continent, the development of RRI programs there must be undertaken with even more than the usual level of attention. At the 2012 Africa regional planning meeting, the regional planning team expressed a keen interest in close involvement with this process and future program development must take this desire into full account. The rapid achievement of full staffing in the Africa section of RRG is an extremely important pre-condition to success in this critical program development effort.

6. **Strategic cycle integration**

Whatever sort of "streamlined" monitoring effort is carried out by RRI during FP II should be more closely integrated with any evaluation exercises undertaken during the same period. This need not require the participation of the IM Team in evaluation activity (or vice-versa). The 2011 Mid-Term Review was less a mid-term check-in on the viability of the strategy than a final evaluation carried out (very astutely) in time to inform the Blue Sky strategy review process. This timing is entirely appropriate and much more useful than a final review taking place after the end of the period. But RRG should schedule an actual FP II Mid-Term Review to replace the Independent Monitoring exercise at the end of year two of FP II (2014). This should focus on review of the strategic changes implied by the New Directions. The commitment to a Mid-Term Review and an IM exercise in the same year during FP I was admirable, but was not an optimal use of resources (especially given the lack of integration between the two) and contributed greatly to "assessment fatigue" on the part of the staff. A second evaluative exercise, timed very much like the Mid-Term Review carried out during FP1 (at the end of year four) is also highly advisable. Again, such an exercise could and should substitute for an Independent Monitoring exercise in that year. Finally, occasional, highly-

focused, program-level reviews such as the Communications Audit can make important contributions to RRI's overall learning effort.

7. Monitoring and evaluation training

Expected adjustments to monitoring and evaluation protocols should be accompanied by a comprehensive effort to provide training to staff, management and key Partners and Collaborators on the content and objectives of the new protocols, as well as the importance of all monitoring inputs to RRI's overall learning strategy. In addition to strengthening the learning character of RRI, such a training commitment will yield excellent inputs for further refinement of the Initiative's monitoring approach. These inputs must be captured, analyzed and, as appropriate, implemented.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Rights and Resources Initiative is a diverse coalition of organizations united behind a mission of promoting greater global commitment to forest policy and market reforms that increase local household and community ownership, control, and benefits from forests and trees. In addition to the 14 coalition members (Partners), RRI also relies upon the active participation of a large number of organizational and individual collaborators, as well as a core group of committed and knowledgeable donors.

RRI Partners have established a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and a set of Institutional and Business Arrangements (IBA) or operating principles. The MOU and IBA were put in place in July 2008, and, since that time, have been updated and amended, as necessary, by the RRG Board of Directors. Changes to the MOU occur through a formal process, which includes consultation with Partners. Either RRI Partners or RRG may propose changes to the IBA and all changes are agreed in consultation with the RRG Board. The IBA includes the coalition's core value proposition that **"with a limited incremental investment in improved coherence and coordination, existing organizations can dramatically increase their contribution to the rights, dignity and development of forest dependent people globally as well as to forest conservation and more equitable economic and social development."**

These documents further establish an RRI Secretariat, the Rights and Resources Group (RRG). RRG is a nonprofit organization based in Washington DC with the dual functions of coordinating coalition operations and carrying out value-added activities in the name of RRI. The MOU and IBA outline the functions of RRG and establish its relationship with RRI.

In 2008, as a critical step in the formation of the coalition, members of the eventual core leadership of RRG created a "Framework Proposal" (FP) as a public presentation of RRI's mission, strategic goals and operational approach. In addition to serving as an important internal reference, the FP has been used as a tool to facilitate discussions with potential financial supporters of the project and a frame for guiding their funding. By all accounts, it has served these purposes very well.

In this document, RRI's monitoring and evaluation commitments are first made explicit. According to the Framework Proposal, RRG was to establish its own internal monitoring information system and engage an Independent Monitoring Team to complement RRI's own internal monitoring work and provide an annual report to RRI Partners, RRG's Board of Directors and major donors to the project. The FP also commits RRI to mid-term evaluation of the coalition's achievement of its desired strategic outcomes. The clearest statement of the role of the Independent Monitoring Team is that, "In collaboration with RRI, the monitoring agency will develop a set of indicators and measurements to monitor the progress and ensure learning by all involved."

To date, RRI has facilitated annual independent monitoring exercises from 2008-2011. By June 2010, RRI's own internal monitoring system was fully operational. In early 2011, RRI engaged a team to carry out a Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE), and that evaluation was completed in the fall of

that year. The current Independent Monitoring exercise is the final one mandated by RRI's initial Framework Proposal. RRI's Framework Proposal II, covering the period 2013-2017, describes both the Independent Monitoring role and the Mid-Term evaluation as ongoing elements of the Initiative's implementation commitment, so it is assumed that RRI intends to continue to support Independent Monitoring in some form.

The Terms of Reference developed by RRI for this current (2012) exercise focus the energies of the Independent Monitoring team quite differently than in previous years. Specifically, RRI has charged the Independent Monitor with:

- Validation of the data presented by RRG staff to document progress on RRI's Strategic Outcomes;
- Review of Country Program monitoring reports with an assessment of the extent to which this part of the internal Monitoring and Evaluation exercise is serving its purpose;
- Review of RRG's Response to the Recommendations of the 2011 Independent Monitor's report, with a comment on RRG degree of appropriation of the recommendations of last year's report;
- Validation of senior management's conclusions regarding progress on RRI 2012 Strategic Priorities, using information gathered for this report;
- Identify internal and external obstacles to progress and make recommendations to address those obstacles;
- Provide elements of a cumulative and comprehensive assessment of FP I including:
  - Comments on the extent to which RRI achieved its Project Objectives during the first Framework Proposal period;
  - Comments, based on this and previous IM exercises, on the extent to which internal and independent monitoring systems provide information that made possible mid-course adjustments; and
  - Observations on the emerging strengths and weaknesses of RRI methods of monitoring and implementation.

These terms include several elements that strain the traditional boundaries of the functions of the Independent Monitor. The IM team has agreed to address these elements with the understanding that these reflections are based on the research design of an annual monitoring exercise.

For the second consecutive year, this year's IM exercise did not include attendance at select country planning meetings or field-based validation of the program assessments of those country planning teams. Likewise, it did not include validation of the monitoring conclusions of one or two of RRI's Global Programs, except when the achievements of those programs were cited as proof of advancement on the Initiative's Strategic Outcomes.

Rather than observing and validating the conclusions of select country planning meetings, RRG proposed that the 2012 IM exercise focus on the regional planning meetings, which, for the first time, were being held, during early November 2012, in Washington, DC to coincide with the annual

Global Planning meeting. Not only were those meetings being held together, in Washington, rather than in the regions, but select RRI Collaborators were also being invited to those meetings for the first time. While we consider the selective, on-site monitoring of RRI country programs to be an important part of the IM role, we agreed that this year it made sense to focus monitoring activities on the regional meetings being held in Washington during early November.

This year, RRG has challenged KMSC to move beyond the bounds of the previous three monitoring exercises and engage in "cumulative and comprehensive assessment." In agreeing to these terms of reference, we are clear that an annual monitoring exercise cannot substitute for an external evaluation of the impact of five years of implementation by a complex global initiative. We see the intent of this aspect of KMSC's terms for this project to include assessment of RRI's achievement of the Strategic Outcomes that it established for itself at the beginning of FP I, as well as comments on the effectiveness of monitoring activities carried out by both RRI and the Independent Monitor. The current report combines the results of the 2012 Independent Monitoring exercise with those reflections on the RRI's aggregate performance against desired outcomes.

II. METHODOLOGY

As part of its agreement with Framework Proposal I, RRI established a Five-Year Logical Framework that clarified an overall Goal and Purpose for the project, and two main indicators through which RRI would measure its fulfillment of that Goal and Purpose. Those indicators were the change in the percentage of forested land under community management at the global level and the change in the percentage incidence of poverty in the world's forested areas. The logframe also included a series of Results/Outputs that RRI would deliver and resource inputs that would be required to achieve those outputs.

The first two independent monitoring exercises used this log-frame as the guide to independent monitoring activities and commitments. During the first half of 2010, RRI formalized its own internal monitoring and evaluation system. As part of that process, which was mandated by the Framework Proposal, RRI revised the original project log-frame to clarify a series of Strategic Outcomes that represented RRI's highest-level statements of the achievements that would serve its larger Purpose and Goal. Subsequent Independent Monitoring exercises have been designed to complement and interact with RRI's internal system. The 2010 revised log-frame has remained the primary reference for those exercises.

The Independent Monitor's methodology has been based on the following principles:

1. Effective monitoring is more focused on progress toward desired outcomes, rather than the delivery of outputs or activities;
2. It employs data gathered to demonstrate progress on outcomes and uses internal and external sources to selectively validate both the data and conclusions based on it;
3. It is participatory, including and informed by inputs and perspectives from a range of key stakeholders; and

4. To be an effective use of resources, monitoring must:
   a. Promote learning across the organization;
   b. Allow intermediate assessment of progress toward desired outcomes;
   c. Facilitate mid-course tactical adjustments by decision-makers at all levels;
   d. Feed useful information into the planning and evaluation elements of an ongoing strategic cycle.

In implementing a time and resource-bound Independent Monitoring exercise in 2012, the IM team has used the following research techniques:

1. Preliminary interviews with RRG senior management;
2. Attendance, with active observation, at key RRI planning meetings and public dialogues;
3. Review of documents provided by RRG;
4. Review of key monitoring inputs created as part of RRI's own internal monitoring system;
5. Individual interviews with RRG staff and RRI Partner Representatives;
6. E-mail consultations and interviews with RRI Collaborator representatives and external actors in a position to comment on RRI's monitoring conclusions regarding progress on Strategic Outcomes;
7. Consultation of Working Findings with RRI senior management, RRI Partner representatives and Donor representatives.

This combination of methodology and data collection techniques provides the backdrop to the present Independent Monitor's Report. The findings of the report include recommendations for action by RRI senior management and others. While the findings included here are consulted with the full range of RRI stakeholders, it is independent of all of those perspectives and represents the considered view of the Independent Monitor, who assumes sole responsibility for its conclusions and recommendations.

As in previous years, the IM takes this opportunity to thank the senior management and the entire staff of RRG for the seriousness with which they continue to engage the Independent Monitoring process, and for their unconditional willingness to respond to the occasionally perplexing requests of the IM for information and direction. In addition, we wish to recognize the cooperative and collaborative attitudes of RRI Partners, Collaborators, the RRG Board of Directors and numerous allies of the Initiative who unselfishly gave of their time and knowledge in an ongoing effort to learn the lessons of this unique experience.[1]

III.   RRI's MONITORING APPROACH

As stated above, RRI's Framework Proposal I commits the network to establish both an Internal Monitoring System and an Independent Monitor role. The proposal likewise establishes that the

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[1] While a large number of people provided indispensible inputs to this report, and RRG senior management has had the opportunity to offer corrective comments to report drafts, errors of omission and/or commission are the exclusive responsibility

network will both carefully plan its actions in accordance with a defined strategy and devote resources to evaluate the progress of its implementation against its strategic intent.

For KMSC, the way RRI carries out these three elements (planning, monitoring and evaluation) establishes RRI's overall approach to learning from its work and integrating those lessons into ongoing practice as part of a permanent "strategic cycle." The quality and coherence of these strategic cycle interventions is one important determinant of the effectiveness of any organization or network. A key role of senior management is to assure the quality and coherence of these interventions.

Over the past four years, KMSC has been charged with helping RRI develop a coherent monitoring approach as one part of these strategic cycle interventions. For KMSC, monitoring is:

> The systematic gathering, validation and analysis of implementation-related data to allow a given organization or network to: (1) track and measure progress toward its desired strategic outcomes; (2) make mid-course tactical adjustments, as necessary and (3) implement periodic evidence-based evaluation exercises that determine strategic effectiveness and support any required strategic redirection.

KMSC's role has included defining and implementing the Independent Monitoring role, while, at the same time, supporting RRI in the creation and implementation of its own internal monitoring system. We have made every effort to insure the complementarity and integration of these two monitoring functions in an overall RRI monitoring approach.

This approach has emerged around a series of monitoring "instruments," each of which is designed to monitor a particular aspect of the network's work while providing a key stakeholder with the opportunity to provide a data-supported input to the network's strategic cycle interventions. Both internal and independent monitoring roles gain definition in relation to these instruments. All monitoring systems define a key reference that provides guidance for the design and ongoing use of monitoring instruments. In RRI's case, this reference document is the Initiative's Strategic Logical Framework, as represented in the Logical Framework designed alongside the creation of the Framework Proposal and revised as part of the creation of RRI's Internal Monitoring system in 2010.[2]

For purposes of the current IM exercise, we will list the current monitoring instruments in Table 1, along with their designed purpose, the stakeholder responsible for providing the data and the built-in mechanism for the validation of that data.

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[2] A new Logical Framework for Framework Proposal II in early 2012, and we assume that the existing monitoring instruments will be adjusted on the basis of that document.

Table 1
Current RRI Monitoring Instruments, November 2012

Instrument	Purpose	Responsible for Data Collection	Valida-tion[3]
Milestone Reports[4]	Provide data supporting RRI claims that it has reached a "milestone" in the attainment of one of network Strategic Outcomes.	RRG staff responsible for implementation	IM
Annual Program Monitoring Reports (APMR)	Document the results of annual program-level (both Global and Country and Regional) discussions of progress toward the program's strategic outcomes.	Primary program planning group[5]	IM[6]
RRG Response to IM Recommendations	Document the implementation response to tactical recommendations made by the IM in IM reports.	RRG Senior Management	IM
RRI Annual Organizational Priorities	Documentation of overall RRI annual priorities as understood by senior management, as well as annual progress on those priorities.	RRG Senior Management	RRG Board
Contract Completion Reports	Document the completion of contracted activities by an RRI Partner, Collaborator or SRM recipient.	Implementing organization	RRG Staff

As suggested, each of these instruments is designed to feed information and analysis into a process of mid-course tactical adjustments to implementation and period strategic review. While these instruments were designed with both simplicity and resource limitations in mind, they do require both an investment of time on the part of the stakeholders involved, as well as some basic orientation to these instruments and monitoring techniques.

In 2010, when the internal monitoring system was first rolled out, the Independent Monitor collaborated with the RRG Senior Manager in charge of Monitoring and Evaluation to facilitate a short "roll-out" orientation to the proposed monitoring approach for RRG Senior Managers, Coordinators and Facilitators. The following January, during the RRI Governance Meetings at Osprey Point, the IM gave a 45-minute presentation on the internal monitoring system to RRG staff and attending Partner representatives. Finally, during the RRI regional meetings, held to coincide with the Global Planning Meeting in November 2012, the IM held a one-hour lunch briefing for all Partners and Collaborators attending the meeting to share information about the role of the Independent Monitor. All other training and/or orientation activities concerning the Internal Monitoring System have been conducted by staff.

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[3] It is important to note here that it was assumed in the design of RRI's monitoring approach that resource availability would limit both the gathering of data and the validation of that data. A large part of the role of the Independent Monitor is the **selective** validation of data gathered and presented by RRI stakeholders.

[4] These have often been called "Monitoring Data Reports." The more descriptive and precise title, "Milestone Reports" will be used in this report.

[5] In the case of Global Programs, this will generally be the RRG staff group responsible for the program. In Country and Regional Programs, this will be the relevant country or regional planning group.This is designed to be the document of a **discussion** by the relevant planning group, not the product of a detailed survey of program outputs by RRG staff.

[6] This is always done selectively. In no case has the IM validated the data summarized in all of the APMRs produced in a given year.

While the November 2012 meeting provided some valuable input to the IM concerning ways to increase IM effectiveness, the primary finding of the activity is that Partners possess uneven levels of understanding of the role of the Independent Monitor and their (the Partners) contribution to that role. The understanding of Collaborators is more uniform, as their understanding of the role of the IM is almost entirely limited to contact they may have had with a member of the IM team via a country monitoring visit to their country.

IV.   RRI'S STRATEGIC MILESTONES

As part of the process of developing clarity around the objectives of RRI's first five years of work, RRG developed a Logical Framework (LF) expressing the strategic intent of the project and indicating how leadership might affirm over time that it was on the way to achieving intended outcomes. (See Appendix One.) When the Initiative established the contours of its own monitoring and evaluation system in 2010, it restructured that LF so as to enhance its value as a management tool. The resulting revised LF clarified five Strategic Outcomes that highlighted what RRI saw as the primary desired for the five-year planning period. For each Strategic Outcome, RRI attempted to specify an indicator, with the idea that ongoing data collection and analysis in relation to the indicator would allow the Initiative to determine whether or not it was on the right track. These outcomes and outcome indicators are summarized in Table 2, below.

Table 2
Rights and Resources Initiative, Strategic Outcomes and Indicators of Progress, June 2010

STRATEGIC OUTCOME	INDICATOR STATEMENT
SO1: Complementary global, national, regional and local organizations effectively synergize to achieve significant breakthroughs in tenure reform processes	Facilitate at least twenty new, value-added joint actions and activities between Partners and collaborators w/ a demonstrable effect on the other strategic outcomes.
SO2: A select set of strategic networks are better-informed, more active and effective in promoting reform nationally, regionally and/or globally	At least six existing or new networks increase their capacity to influence policy related to forest tenure at all levels.
SO3: Key strategic actors at the global level are committed and engaged in promoting major reforms in existing tenure, regulatory and governance arrangements	At least five inter-governmental and multilateral institutions (multilateral banks, ITTO, and other UN institutions) alter their position on forest tenure and actively support tenure and related reforms in their narrative and portfolios.
SO4: Changes in tenure legislation and regulatory or policy framework in favor of local communities in a subset of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America	In six countries where RRI is active, structural tenure reforms (legal, regulatory, policy) are adopted and/or advanced.
SO5: More equitable forest governance, enterprise and conservation models are identified and disseminated and/or more broadly supported as a viable approach to support social and economic development.	In at least five cases, these models lead to an increase in community access to resources and markets.

Once identified, these Strategic Outcomes and Indicators became the basis for RRI's internal assessment of whether or not its work is "on track" in a global sense. During 2010, RRI presented data ("Milestone Reports") related to a series of achievements that had taken place during the first three years of the Framework Proposal period. RRI understands these achievements as Milestones that indicate that RRI is on the path to bringing about the outcomes for which it was established. Similarly, in 2011, the Initiative identified and reported on eight more such Milestones.

The progress report included as part of the 2011 IM report indicated that RRI was very much on track to achieve the indicated Milestones related to all Strategic Outcomes except for SO1, "Number of effective value-added joint actions facilitated/organized." This is the outcome that suggests that RRI sees the promotion "synergy" among its Partners and Collaborators as central to its mission, provided that those "value-added joint actions" result in some significant step toward tenure reform or the realization of existing tenure rights in a given national or regional context.

At the January 2012 Governance Meetings of RRI, RRG explained that it was falling short in documenting these "value-added collaborations," rather than in actually facilitating such productive collaborations, i.e., it was successfully promoting tenure reform by fostering collaboration among its Partners and Collaborators, but had not documented many examples of this phenomenon. RRG expressed concern about the amount of time it would take to document these examples of synergy within the network. This concern led to a proposal from RRG to its Board that the Secretariat be released from the responsibility of documenting these Milestones, and the Board supported the proposal. As a result, the Milestone reports for 2012 do not include any additional Milestone Reports on SO1.

The IM team certainly acknowledges the time required to document Milestones, but also sees value in the documentation of progress toward the realization of RRI's Strategic Outcomes. Interestingly, the Mid-term Review (MTR) commissioned by RRG in 2011 placed this notion of adding value through the facilitation of productive network collaboration at the center of RRI's theory of change. The evaluation report states:

> ***The assumption that different kinds of RRI program actions can influence policy environments is strongly affirmed by the MTE***. *However, the understanding that different program elements interact to form strategic and synergistic wholes was not widely shared by interviewees and is only partially confirmed. While Partners and Collaborators emphasized RRI's important role in spearheading policy impact in the countries concerned and were able to identify new levels of awareness and lines of policy influence related to RRI activity, they were unable to trace specific policy outcomes at the legislative level back to identifiable synergies fostered by RRI as a coalition of Partners. This resulted in the MTE's hope of providing documented maps of synergistic causal pathways to policy change being infeasible* (p. 4).

The statement confirms the policy relevance of RRI as a network, which must be a product of actions of network participants. At the same time, the authors of the MTR confess an inability to locate evidence of specific collaborative interventions by the Initiative's Partners and Collaborators. This speaks directly to RRI's internal monitoring function. While the IM team has heard observed that Partners and Collaborators sometimes work in isolation at the country level, we have also seen ample evidence of value-added collaborations that have shown real results. Ten such collaborations were documented by RRI in 2010 and 2011.[7] It is important to note that the citation above refers to synergistic collaborations leading to legislative reforms. Only a fraction of the documented synergies led to legislative changes, but, as the Initiative's Strategic Outcomes suggest, RRI has not been designed exclusively to achieve change at the legislative level.

SO1 was designed to promote the collection of data on such collaborations. We sympathize with the Board's feeling that documenting ten more effective collaborations among Partners and Collaborators in a single year would be burdensome for RRG staff. We also note the importance of establishing that RRI is, in fact, facilitating such collaborations. We believe that even simply naming those collaborations and pointing to their results would have had value for RRI. This is especially true when a study as complete as the MTR fails to find evidence of network synergies leading to progress on tenure reform at the national level.

That digression explains the fact that the Milestones reported by RRI in 2012 do not include any additional Milestones related to SO1. During 2012, RRI has reported on four achievements culminating in 2012 that it believes mark Milestones on the road to achieving its Strategic Outcomes . These Milestones are summarized in the Table 3, below.

Table 3
RRI's Proposed Implementation Milestones, 2011

SO	Identification	RRI MONITORING HYPOTHESIS
SO2	Rethinking Forest Regulations	Targeted forest agency leaders and civil society representatives have a clearer understanding of regulatory options for increasing rural development and respecting local community and Indigenous Peoples' rights.
SO3	UN-FAO and the Influence of RRI Tenure Tracking	RRI's innovative and robust tenure tracking methodology and analytical products influenced FAO's forest tenure monitoring and has led to widespread adoption of RRI's tenure data findings by key actors in the forest and climate change arenas.

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[7] Our own analysis of these Milestones suggest that some of them were clearer examples of synergy among Partners and Collaborators, facilitated by RRI, but, taken together, the examples make a strong case that RRI is at least partially fulfilling this critical element of its value proposition.

SO	Identification	RRI MONITORING HYPOTHESIS
SO4	Catalyzing a Multi-Stakeholder Research Process on Tenure Reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	By mobilizing a broad-based research coalition of local, national and international NGOs and IOs from a variety of sectors and geographic specialty areas to develop and begin the implementation of a broad-based tenure baseline study, RRI has positioned itself as a primary interlocutor in ongoing and future discussions related to natural resource tenure reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).
SO5	Liberia Pitsawing Regulations and Related Capacity Building	In March, 2012, the Forest Development Authority (FDA) of Liberia issued a new regulation that legalizes community pitsawing for the first time, facilitated in part by RRI support to Liberian pitsawyer advocates and the pitsawyers' union (the Liberian Chainsaw & Timber Dealers Union, or LICSATDUN). This regulation has allowed the pitsawyers union to build its capacity to demonstrate credibility in its operations and markets, develop improved relationships between pitsawyers and forest managers and market players, and generally improved the business environment for pitsawyers.

It is important to note that these are not annual milestones highlighting implementation exclusively taking place in 2012. Instead, these are strategic achievements that RRI is reporting in 2012. Implementation relating to these achievements may well have taken place over multiple years.

Validation

For each Milestone, RRG staff collects monitoring data over the course of implementation. Staff then writes a Milestone Report that synthesizes the data and arrives at a Monitoring Hypothesis stating RRI's key achievement in the most succinct form possible. Primary data sources are attached to the report. A member of the Independent Monitoring Team then:

1. Reviews the report;
2. Asks clarifying questions of staff, as necessary;
3. Analyzes all data presented in support of the report;
4. As feasible and appropriate, contacts additional internal and external sources (recommended by RRG) to corroborate report conclusions; and
5. Comments on the extent to which the available data corroborate the Monitoring Hypothesis and whether or not the achievement represents progress toward one of RRI's Strategic Outcomes.

Milestone 1: Rethinking Forest Regulation (SO2)

SO2 - Rethinking Forest Regulations milestone: *International training workshops (2010-12) for forest agency officials and civil society representatives to study the Montana case, discuss challenges linked to forest regulations and expose participants to a successful and innovative regulatory model.*

OUTCOME REFERENCE: A select set of strategic networks are better-informed, more active and effective in promoting reform nationally, regionally and/or globally.

INDICATOR REFERENCE: At least six existing or new networks increase their capacity to influence policy related to forest tenure at all levels.

Many countries are rethinking forest regulations for better environmental, development and production results. A challenge identified by RRI is that protagonists of the reform process have only limited exposure to new ideas and networks that might inform their reform work. Members of Megaflorestais, the RRI-facilitated global network of high-level forestry officials from heavily-forested countries, suggested that RRI provide a parallel learning opportunity for public agency staff and civil society representatives to learn about new regulatory tools and experiences, especially concerning forest rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

The Milestone report states that, "Montana was chosen as a case study for its capacity to show promising and innovative regulatory systems in four ownership types (on federal, state, private and tribal lands) and collaboration across ownerships, land uses and landscapes. The Montana example was used to trigger off discussions and new ideas at the regional and global scales."

There have been three seminars – one each in 2010, 2011 and 2012. Evaluations are overwhelmingly positive. Participants (approximately 20 to 30 per session) are largely satisfied with the workshop content and the opportunity to meet other people from other countries who are grappling with similar challenges. Participants are encouraged to keep in touch with one another, "allowing the special relationships and professional bonds created during the week-long meetings to continue."

One source consulted for this report played a key role in organizing the multi-day seminars, organizing logistics and working with RRI to prepare the agenda. He observes that participants have been fully engaged in the seminars, the highlight of which is the field trip to speak with Native American tribes about their resource management regimes. He had initially expressed concern that visits to indigenous peoples might not sit well with some participants where indigenous rights are still highly contested, but that has not been the case. The Chinese delegation even wrote a report in which it expressed just how useful that particular visit was in thinking through challenges with resource management among minority groups in China.

The informant feels that, if there were to be follow-up from the seminars for ongoing learning and relationship building among participants, he would likely have to be the engine of the follow-up. The seminars consistently end with the best of intentions for participants to keep in touch to support one another, but his hunch—he does not possess hard data on this—is that this is not occurring. For him, this is the weakness of an otherwise excellent program. He wasn't sure if and how the seminar might be integrated into other RRI programming--for example, if the regional facilitators facilitate ongoing collaboration among seminar participants within their geographical scope. He doubted that follow-up mechanisms are in place.

Multiple comments offered by an African participant in the recent RRI Global Planning meetings confirm the fact that follow-up on the Montana experiences is an issue and that, absent such follow-up, the increased understanding attained by seminar participants may not translate into advances in national tenure reform processes. The question is who would provide such follow-up? This points to a persistent problem across all sorts of networks that concerns the difficulty of realizing the benefits of exchange experiences that remove people from their regular work environment for a specialized educational experience and then expect them to act differently when they return to that regular environment, with or without ongoing support to apply the lessons of the external experience.

The source active in the organizing of the Montana events is a great admirer of RRI's work and expressed high satisfaction that he is able to collaborate with the project. He did state, however, that if his participation ceased tomorrow, the seminars would likely cease. That raises the issue of sustainability of the program.

RRG's report identifies the willingness of senior forestry officials to invest in the participation of their staff as an indicator of its value to those officials. For the past three years, both the number of participants and countries has been growing. Several forest agencies have shown a steady interest in the workshop, especially Brazil and Peru, as a way to increase staff knowledge of tenure reforms. The informant, although pleased by the participation and enthusiasm, wondered if the participants might just be enjoying the free trip to the U.S. Ongoing participant engagement following the seminar might be a more useful indicator of its usefulness. RRG echoes this concern in its report by commenting that is is "still too early in the life of this network to know if Rethinking Forest Regulations participants will sustain their interest in relating to each other as members of a peer learning network, or, most importantly, to what extent their exposure to new information and relationships through RRI will help them become more active and effective reform proponents."

The informant raised another concern. The Rethinking Forest Regulations workshop was held in the western U.S. state of Montana where an interesting, multi-stakeholder regulatory model serves as the departure point for learning and discussion. While participants express great interest in the Montana model, he also wonders if network learning and consolidation might not be better served by decentralized trainings, for example, at the Bangkok agro-forestry center.

RRI's Strategic Outcomes #2 focuses on increasing the ability of strategic networks to understand and advocate for tenure reform. The Monitoring Hypothesis in the Milestone speaks of building the understanding and capacity of "Targeted forest officials and civil society representatives." This feels more like a capacity-building program for individuals and, in the best case, their organizations, rather than an exercise in network strengthening as defined by the RRI Strategic Outcome. The IM offered a similar reflection on the claim that RRG's very similar support of the "Next Generation" program met SO2's definition of a strategic network that, in part through RRI's intervention became "better-informed, more active and effective in promoting reform nationally, regionally and/or globally." The Milestone Report makes no explicit claim that "Rethinking Forest Regulations"

participants form anything like a strategic network. RRG's work with both these programs of people (Next Generation and Rethinking Forest Regulations) does seem to be strengthening Megaflorestais as a network by deepening the commitment of network participants, increasing the tenure reform knowledge among a broader group of officials within participating ministries. While Megaflorestais members don't generally take joint advocacy action, there is some evidence that relationships with key officials developed via Megaflorestais are opening the doors to important policy changes in certain national environments (Indonesia being the most obvious example). The issue, from the perspective of measuring progress, is that RRG already included Megaflorestais among the networks it was building in the 2010 IM report.

In conclusion, the IM certainly finds evidence of important capacity-building and awareness-building work being facilitated by RRG with important groups of individuals grouped in and around Megaflorestais. It is, however, something of a stretch to construe the outcome of this work as "building the tenure reform advocacy capacity of networks." By using its work with and around Megaflorestais to define three of the six networks that it has supported in this way, RRG is not making the strongest possible case for the impact of its work with networks, or for the importance of this work to its overall mission. Maximizing the impact of these interventions on future tenure reform efforts will require significantly more attention to intentional follow-up to these valuable gatherings.

Milestone 2: SO3 UN-FAO and Influence of RRI Tenure Tracking

Outcome Reference: RRI's development of tenure data and tracking has had demonstrable impact in FAO, resulting in additional categories of sophistication in tenure tracking and significantly influencing the development of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests.

Indicator Reference: At least five inter-governmental and multilateral institutions (multilateral banks, ITTO, and other UN institutions) alter their position on forest tenure and actively support tenure and related reforms in their narrative and portfolios.

Monitoring Hypothesis: RRI's innovative and robust tenure tracking methodology and analytical products influenced FAO's forest tenure monitoring and has led to widespread adoption of RRI's tenure data findings by key actors in the forest and climate change arenas.

This hypothesis suggests, on the one hand, that FAO's tenure tracking methodology changed significantly between 2005 and 2010. It also makes the claim that RRI's own work on tenure tracking influenced that important institutional change within FAO. Supporting data would need to substantiate both aspects of the hypothesis in order to validate it. Document review, alone, can usually confirm a change in position, but identifying the sources of that change almost always requires a combination of documentary evidence and the input of people involved in the change.

Perhaps the highest compliment paid to a data set is that the data is consulted in the forging of policies and programs. Its application confirms that it is relevant, rigorous and accessible.

One powerful data point confirming progress on this SO milestone is DFID's decision to use RRI's data in tracking changes in forest tenure. DFID considered a variety of possible data sources to use, including those generated by the International Forestry Resources and Institutions (IFRI) and the Forest Peoples Program (FPP). To track regional and global trends and to aggregate single cases, they found that RRI's tenure data was the best fit for DFID's needs. One can imagine that DFID is under considerable scrutiny in Britain's polarized political environment to use rigorous, objective data, so this endorsement is a high accolade.

Likewise, in reviewing a USAID document referenced by RRG entitled, "Land Tenure Devolution of Forest Rights and Sustainable Forest Management", the authors paid RRI high honors, "We draw particular attention to the Rights and Resources Initiative's (RRI) extensive and on-going effort to document how rights to forested land are distributed in developing countries. RRI's (2012) report, "What rights?: A comparative analysis of developing countries' national legislation on community and indigenous peoples' forest tenure rights", which contains a very detailed examination of 27 countries' national laws pertaining to forest devolution and the rights that are granted through those laws, was published as we were finalizing the case studies included in this document. Although conducted independently, our study's findings mesh very closely with RRI's findings, an indication that the conclusions from both studies are robust."

The outcome reference refers specifically to influencing and informing the FAO's voluntary guidelines on tenure. The strongest validation of this claim would have come from interviews with professional staff at FAO responsible for the institution's tenure tracking work, or from tenure specialists at other institutions in a position to see and evaluate shifts in FAO's practice. Despite repeated attempts, the IM team was unable to interview either of the two people suggested by RRI for this purpose.

In that absence of corroborating interviews, document review assumes additional importance. A quick review of documents found on the FAO website regarding forest tenure did turn up numerous references to RRI's data and to its leadership in the field, however with respect to the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests, I could find no reference to RRI's data or documents. Since we were unable to interview anyone from FAO, we are unable to substantiate the claim.

In the same monitoring report, RRG claims that the FAO's FRA 2010 contained an important reframing of forest tenure compared to its 2005 report due to "significant influence that can be attributed to RRI's proactive engagement with FAO." The documents, themselves, support the notion that FAO changed its view of how to best track changes in tenure arrangements. The role of RRI's own methodology in that change is less clear from the document, itself, as RRI is only lightly cited, in one bibliographic reference. While a full study of the shifts in the FAO approach is beyond the scope of this study, the IM team's analysis does suggest that the changes in the FAO

methodology are at least consistent with innovations promoted by the RRI methodology. While the FRA, itself, does not credit RRI, the FAO website cites RRI and its work on tenure tracking numerous times. All of this provides clear circumstantial evidence of an RRI role in the FAO transition in approach. Again, this circumstantial evidence would be greatly strengthened by data gained through participant interviews.

More generally, a simple Google search seems to confirm that RRI is indeed a sought-after source for forest tenure data, but we could not confirm RRG's assessment that, "RRI's data is now the point of reference and FAO is no longer the major source of credible information on forest tenure dynamics." Such broad claims are almost impossible to verify, and are not really required to reach the standard of influence implied by RRI's Strategic Outcome.

Not all of the claims included in the data for this Milestone can be validated, but the data do fully support the general point that RRI has influenced the FAO's positioning and practice on technical issues related to tenure tracking. This central claim may well have been fully validated if we had interviewed FAO personnel.

Milestone 3: SO4 Catalyzing a multi-stakeholder research process on tenure in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

<u>Outcome Reference</u>: Changes in tenure legislation and regulatory or policy framework in favor of local communities in a subset of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

<u>Indicator Reference</u>: In six countries where RRI is active, structural tenure reforms (legal, regulatory, policy) are adopted/advanced.

<u>MONITORING HYPOTHESIS</u>: By mobilizing a broad-based research coalition of local, national and international NGOs and IOs from a variety of sectors and geographic specialty areas to develop and begin the implementation of a broad-based tenure baseline study, RRI has positioned itself as a primary interlocutor in ongoing and future discussions related to natural resource tenure reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Given the size of the DRC and the immensity of its forested lands, RRI decided to begin exploring ways that it might contribute to building the foundation for improved land tenure policies, programs and laws there. In 2012, RRI assembled a critical mass of government and civil society entities interested in contributing to a baseline study of land tenure institutions, laws and policies. More than 15 local, national and international organizations support this work. The study comes at an opportune time, with the government setting out to reform the country's outdated land code. The DRC government has recently established a "road map" for this work, which RRI hopes to inform by the baseline study.

Sources confirm that RRI's work in the Congo has succeeded in attracting the attention and enlisting the support of key public and private actors. The World Bank is particularly interested in data collected in this survey, as it will help inform their programs in the Congo. The 2012 Data

Monitoring Report claims, "The government has even acknowledged RRI's role as a major interlocutor on issues of tenure by inviting it to be part of the organization of the Land Reform Conference in July 2012. During the conference, the Baseline study was frequently referred to as an ambitious endeavor whose outcome could provide a critical tool in informing the reform debates."

The baseline project is seen not only as creating a critical data bank, but also as a means of building the capacity of land and resource-related agencies and organizations. Some of these institutions are RRI partners.

One is struck by the timeliness of the project and its strategic value, how it paves the way for improvements in the DRC's land and natural resource practices. RRI perceived an absence of basic baseline data, which would point to needed changes and serve as a starting point to measure land policy and resource rights progress. Judging from the uptake of this work with the DRC government and the World Bank, among others, RRI is seen as a credible research organization with the capacity to convene a range of relevant actors. Its innovative method of including and building the capacity of local civil society organizations throughout this process appears to have been accepted by a variety of actors in the Congolese context.

Collecting credible data is an essential precondition of policy reform. The information obtained may be useful in future advocacy work to hold government agencies accountable for claims of progress. Leading a process to create a baseline study appears a smart approach for RRI to interject objective data and obtain a seat at the land tenure policy table.

RRI's monitoring hypothesis suggests that, "RRI has positioned itself as a primary interlocutor in ongoing and future discussions related to natural resource tenure reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)." Our interviews bear out that hypothesis, in large measure.

At the same time, sources consulted for this report shared concerns about how RRI's work might unfold as time passes. The fact that RRI has been so successful in leading this baseline effort means that they are invited to participate in, or lead, an increasing number of relevant processes. The DRC government seeks their engagement and technical assistance; UN Habitat and the World Bank have also expressed appreciation for RRI's work and seek collaboration. RRI has, of course, partners on the ground in the Congo but RRI does not have personnel there. High-level engagement with the government, World Bank, etc. tends to be carried out by RRG senior staff traveling from Washington. This raises a concern for some about the extent to which RRI's local Partners and Collaborators will drive the Initiative's program as it takes root in this critical and complex country.

RRG insists that it understands the concern, but observes that it has followed its usual approach in establishing its work in the DRC. RRI has engaged with a set of well-established local collaborators and international organizations in ways that have solicited and assured buy-in on the Initiative's current role. According to RRG, this is helping to open political space to local actors, but is not creating dependency on RRG. Once the baseline is better defined, RRI will clarify the nature of its longer-term engagement in DRC and, along with local actors, establish the nature of the national platform there.

In any event, DRC is likely to become another case in which the need for stronger in-country facilitation will soon become an evident need for RRI. The demands of program support in the DRC may soon stretch the capabilities of the current sub-regional facilitation structure.

Two factors operate against the ability of the IM team to validate advances in this work to a degree possible in some other cases. The first concerns the recent initiation of the work in DRC and the relative lack of information about that work. Data provided by RRG in support of this Monitoring hypothesis was less complete than that provided in support of other Milestone Reports. Anecdotal evidence supports the data provided in strongly favoring the notion that an important breakthrough has occurred, that RRI played in critical role in that breakthrough and that the future of this work is extremely promising. In this sense, the Milestone is validated. Additional documentation and interviews would have provided important complementary support to this anecdotal evidence.

A second issue concerns a certain incongruity between the achievement claimed by RRI in this Milestone and the Strategic Outcome to which it is connected. The Monitoring Hypothesis relates directly to progress on the baseline study and thus, as mentioned, can be validated. At the same time, the outcome reference reads, "Changes in tenure legislation and regulatory or policy framework in favor of local communities in a subset of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America". The indicator reference sets the low bar of tenure reforms being "adopted/advanced," but this has generally required the presence of a reform agenda supported by the RRI platform and other civil society actors. In addition, progress on this outcome in a country has generally required that RRI demonstrate that its actions advanced this agenda in a strategic way. It is not clear that situation in the DRC yet meets this standard.

There is no doubt that RRI has achieved important positioning in the DRC and that this positioning has already contributed to the launch of an important study and preliminary indications of possible shifts in civil society/government relations there. From the perspective of the IM team this achievement is more akin to the "value-added collaboration" envisioned in RRI's SO1, than the concrete advancement of tenure reforms envisioned in SO4.

What can be confirmed is RRI's effective engagement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to begin the implementation of a broad-scale baseline study of natural resource tenure institutions. RRI identified a critical gap in information that had been preventing DRC public agencies from establishing and monitoring tenure reforms. RRI's technical support and political know-how in leading a baseline study was embraced by a broad range of actors.

Milestone 4: SO5 Liberia Pitsawing Regulations and Related Capacity Building

Outcome Reference: More equitable forest governance, enterprise and conservation models are identified and disseminated and/or more broadly supported as a viable approach to support social and economic development.

<u>Indicator Reference</u>: In at least five cases, these models lead to an increase in community access to resources and markets.

<u>Monitoring Hypothesis</u>: In March, 2012, the Forest Development Authority (FDA) of Liberia issued a new regulation that legalizes community pitsawing for the first time, facilitated in part by RRI support to Liberian pitsawyer advocates and the pitsawyers' union (the Liberian Chainsaw & Timber Dealers Union, or LICSATDUN). This regulation has allowed the pitsawyers union to build its capacity to demonstrate credibility in its operations and markets, develop improved relationships between pitsawyers and forest managers and market players, and generally improved the business environment for pitsawyers.

Over past years, RRI's Liberian partners and RRG have been involved in complex, multi-actor advocacy for forest sector reform, to influence the Liberian government, the World Bank and other donor policies and programs. While there have been advances and setbacks, a clear victory was the passage in 2009 of the Community Rights Law, albeit with some notable flaws. Another victory occurred in 2012, when artisanal small-scale loggers (pitsawyers) achieved legal recognition of their timber operations. Without legality, pitsawyers would not be guaranteed reliable, long-term access to forest resources and be less likely to invest in equipment, training, and long-term relationships with community forest managers and local forestry officials.

Green Advocates, an RRI partner, worked closely with the pitsawyers union, LICSATDUN, to draft regulations for legal pitsawing. Green Advocates also led a process to write a handbook that details best sawyering practices. They trained pitsawyers in applying these practices to their operations. LICSATDUN seeks to fortify their members' livelihoods through introducing sustainable practices, including reforestation to ensure a renewable forest resource base. The handbook and the over 45 trainings accompanying it have demonstrated to the government and donors that the pitsawyers are indeed committed to sustainable business practices. That dedication to training and new practices may be part of the reason that LICSATDUN received EU monies to train chainsaw operators in Nimba and Gbarpolu.

From LICSATDUN's perspective, the approved version of the pitsawyering law has flaws but nevertheless represents a big step forward. Amendments can and will be sought. The new regulations state that "the Government of Liberia recognizes the need to formally recognize and regulate chain sawing in Liberia as a means of maximizing the socio-economic benefits of chain sawing while addressing/mitigating its negative ecological and environmental impacts" and that "chain sawing activities have significant social contributions and also constitute some critical source of livelihood for many persons, especially vulnerable, unemployed individuals and poor communities."

That this language was written into law at all is very significant and a sign of the effectiveness of RRI's advocacy efforts. According to informants, the first pitsawyering permits are scheduled for issue before the end of 2012.

RRG's Milestone Report notes that, "while informal pitsawing operations are a hot topic throughout Central and West Africa, it is only Liberia that has created a legal space for pitsawing and substantially improved the image of the informal sawyers groups and their Union." Why the advocacy has been so successful in Liberia – and relatively less successful in other countries – may be a fruitful research area for RRI to inform winning campaigns throughout the region. Little evidence was available on how legal recognition of the pitsawyers' activities facilitates the competitive edge of their presumably improved small enterprises. Positive outcomes with respect to business sustainability, income improvements and natural resource input availability are of interest to RRI and would be important areas to track in future monitoring.

Informants interviewed about this work were unanimous in expressing that it positioned civil society organizations to participate in forest policy decision-making venues from which they had been previously excluded. Because it was not suggested that the independent monitor interview members of LICADSTUN, it was difficult to get a sense of who were the primary civil society advocates. What roles do the pitsawyers, themselves, play in relation to more professional NGOs such as Green Advocates? We note that LICADSTUN's name is not listed on the cover of the pitsawyering manual, which may or may have anything to do with relations among the various local actors. RRI's Strategic Outcomes leave open the possibility that different civil society advocates may play different roles, depending on the specific advocacy goals of a project. That said, understanding the complementary roles of community forest user organizations and local NGOs would be helpful in designing and assessing future initiatives. These are important questions about ongoing work in Liberia and elsewhere, but they do not detract from the conclusion that the Monitoring Hypothesis for this Milestone is strongly validated.

Table 3
RRI Milestones Achieved vs. Benchmarks Established, 2008-2012

Out-come	Outcome Indicator	Progress Marker For 2012	Achieved as of end of 2012	+/-
SO1	Number of effective value-added joint actions facilitated/organized	20	10	-10
SO2	Number of engaged networks becoming more capable of influencing tenure policy	6	6	0
SO3	Number of key tenure policy institutions changing policies or practices	5	5	0
SO4	Number of countries adopting/advancing legal/legislative reforms	6	5	-1
SO5	Number of countries in which more equitable tenure/enterprise models increase community access	5	4	-1

V.   PROGRAM-LEVEL MONITORING REPORTS

RRI programs fall into three main categories. These programmatic categories are summarized in Table 4, below:

Table 4
RRI Program Structure, November 2012

Category	Description	Leadership
Country and Regional	Implemented by Partners and Collaborators in countries and regions where RRI is active.	Country and Regional Planning Teams
Global	Implemented at all levels by RRG staff and consultants, often in collaboration with Partners and Collaborators	RRG Senior Management and Staff Teams
Strategic Response Mechanism	Projects implemented outside of existing annual plans in response to specific perceived opportunities to advance RRI's strategic goals.	Concept generally originates outside of RRG. Implementation led by proposing organization(s)

In the design of RRI's internal monitoring and evaluation system, RRG created the Annual Program Monitoring Report (APMR) to assist in the systematic gathering of information about program-level achievements. APMRs were intended to document the conclusions of an annual programmatic assessment discussion to be carried out by program planning teams as part of their annual planning meeting. This was to be a facilitated discussion to capture the most important achievements of that program during the previous year and analyze how those achievements advanced the planning group toward realizing the strategic outcomes it had set for its program. RRG staff (Coordinators and Facilitators) were to play an important role in the planning and facilitation of these meetings, and would be responsible for creating and submitting the final APMR.

These reports were to be received by an RRG staffperson and catalogued in a way that was accessible to all participants in RRI. The Independent Monitor was to selectively validate the contents of these reports, based on priorities established annually with RRG in the creation of the IM Terms of Reference. Validation of Country and Regional APMRs would be achieved by way of country monitoring visits that would include attendance and observation of country and/or regional planning meetings.

In the creation of the Terms of Reference for the 2012 IM exercise, RRG and the IM agreed that this exercise would not include selective validation of APMRs. Rather than conduct country visits to identified RRI programs, the IM would take advantage of the fact that all three regional planning meetings were taking place in Washington, DC, alongside the RRI Global Planning meeting to

analyze the process and outputs of regional planning according to the new methodology being used in 2012. In addition, the IM was to conduct a comparative review of all country level and global program APRMs for content and completeness.

RRI produced fifteen Annual Program Monitoring Reports in relation to 2012 programming. RRG produced country-level reports for Bolivia, Cameroon, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Liberia, Mali, Nepal and Thailand. The teams responsible for Global Programs also produced APMRs for Alternative Tenure and Enterprise Models (ATEMs), Communications, Network Support, Rights and Climate and Tenure Analysis. Given the differences in the planning process for these programs, the content of the country-level APMRs tends to differ significantly from that of the ones generated by Global Programs. For that reason, we deal with them separately here.

Country-level APMRs

As suggested above, for the present report the IM reviewed all 2012 APMRs for content and completeness. The IM first confirmed that APMRs were created for all countries in which a country planning process took place in 2012. Next the reports were reviewed to determine whether or not the basic information required on the reports was presented and, finally, the IM team has highlighted elements of those reports that seem to most strongly reflect the sort of assessment discussion that RRI's internal monitoring process is attempting to encourage. The team finds review of the country-level APMRs to be very difficult, absent the country monitoring visit that was part of the original design of the IM exercises.

The quality of the information in the APMRs has increased steadily over the three years this information has been used. From the perspective of the IM team, all of the staff preparing this year's country APMRs understood the reporting need and were able to provide the necessary information.

In a report format like the APMR, it can be difficult to capture both the diversity of voices and perspectives present in each RRI country platform and the sense of an active collaboration pursuing a joint strategy to achieve tenure reform. This balance is well struck in the cases of the Cameroon, Indonesia, Liberia and Nepal APMRs. The India report included excellent analysis of the strategy being followed by RRI there, but gave less of a sense of the collaborative implementation of that strategy.

Currently, these reports lead with Outcomes from 2008-2012 Strategy and Strategic Achievements (Outcomes) for 2012. This is meant to lead to a reflection on how the year's achievements (planned and unplanned) contributed to the program's larger strategic goals. The APMRs all document such a reflection, to a greater or lesser degree, with the Nepal APMR as a particularly strong example of how to document such a discussion. In the current format, however, there is no obligatory reflection on why some planned outcomes for the year appear not to have been fulfilled. Some planning groups included elements of this thinking in their discussion, but other reports show no evidence of this reflection.

Nearly all APMRs address the constraints faced by the program in achieving its intended outcomes. In several cases, however, constraints described in the APMR's Program Assessment section were external difficulties due to political processes over which the coalition may exert little control or influence. For example, the Guatemala APMR states that, given mining's importance to national

income and to the country's development plans, it is extremely difficult to influence mining policy as it affects forest communities. The Thailand report notes the "parliamentary limbo" of a Community Forestry Bill. Identification of these external challenges and constraints is a necessary condition of effective assessment, but equally important is the analysis of what was done in the face of these challenges and why those tactics did or did not allow the local platform to make progress. There is evidence of this reflection in some reports, but the APMR process does not seem to make the documentation of this reflection a priority.

Some APMRs also capture internal constraints to coalition success. For example, the Bolivian report notes, "To be able to have influenced and responded quickly to a changing legislative agenda, continuous and effective communication and stable communication among coalition members is necessary. However, inter-institutional communication continues to be insufficient and doesn't motivate the best synergy among team members. This has been the situation previously identified by the Bolivian organizations and in spite of agreements to overcome it, they have not been able to carry it out." The report does not document the planning group's collective response to having identified this critical constraint.

Just as RRI's overall internal monitoring system is designed, in part, to allow the Initiative to make mid-course corrections, the monitoring activity being carried out by RRI country platforms should also inform mid-course corrections on the part of those teams. The current approach does not appear to encourage planning teams to ask the question, "Given what we are learning about our work, are the Strategic Outcomes we identified still valid?" Similarly, the current APMR does not encourage the planning group to document any changes in its lines of intervention that are required by its assessment of what is working and what is not working. Such changes are certainly happening. They are just not being captured in RRI's monitoring activity. Some APMRs (Cameroon and Nepal, for example) hint at these sorts of mid-course adjustments, but this is not a typical outcome of the assessment that underlies the APMR process. Here, the fact that the country planning discussion is a place where Partners and Collaborators put forward project proposals for funding may weigh heavily.

At their best, the APMRs should paint a picture of real working relationships—including collaboration, learning, self-critique, mutual accountability—within the country-level RRI coalition. Most importantly, they link assessment of past achievements to future planning activities. While there is much room for improvement in the design, preparation and use of the APMRs, they provide ample evidence of just such relationships among local participants. The following excerpts taken from 2012 APMRs, indicate only a few examples of these sorts of observations. Such fragments could have been surfaced from any of the reports.

> "GA and SDI noted that they were able to learn from the CRL process to better shape the draft land policy. Unfortunately, the coalition notes that the FDA is not very involved in the land reform process, despite the need to make sure FDA and LC are coordinating on policy."

> "Going forward, SDI intends to continue work with the 7 county consortium platform in follow-up discussions, and to time its preparatory meetings with community and CSO representatives to coincide with LC consultations. SDI also intends to sponsor additional

participants from communities and civil society in consultations to ensure strong community representation in the process." (Liberia…assessment leads to prescriptive statements about future work.)

"Thanks to national advocacy, REFACOF-Cameroon was admitted into the national CSO platform on REDD and climate change. This opens opportunities to integrate women and IPs into decision-making on NRM and forestry, but strategies for further integrating women into processes outside REDD are as yet undetermined." (Cameroon…acknowledging achievement, but noting its partial nature…there is still much more to do.)

"The coalition intends to prepare and submit TORs to the government on how to incorporate women into decision-making process related to NRM." (Cameroon…linking assessment to future commitments.)

"RRI's work in Nepal to date on this issue has produced the following key lessons, which can hopefully be applied in the near future:

- There is greater realization that RRI's advocacy campaign was unfocused an inconsistent with the way the constitution-building process unfolded."
  (Nepal…naming lessons, even when they imply self-critique.)

"In addition, RRI Partners and Collaborators in Nepal have expressed the need for a more regular communication and coordination mechanism amongst themselves, which would promote strategic collective action, leverage existing relationships between key Partners or Collaborators and government stakeholders for the Coalition's benefit, and ensure common understanding of shared RRI goals." (Nepal…pointing the way to addressing a constraint by changing something internal that is at least partly within RRI's control.)

Global Program APMRs

RRIs Global Program has evolved into a sort of matrix of interventions managed by RRG. The matrix includes both "functional" distinctions, such as Communications, Network Support or Strategic Analysis, as well as thematic distinctions, including Rights and Climate, Realizing Rights, ATEMS and Tenure Analysis. Work groups are formed around all of these areas, and those groups coordinate to develop and implement plans and strategies related to each set of interventions. Because this process is not formalized in the act of contracting, it tends to be less formal than Country and Regional Planning. Some of these groups create APMRs, while others do not. As suggested above, in 2012, APMRs were created for ATEMS, Communications, Network Support, Rights and Climate and Tenure Analysis. They were not created for Strategic Analysis or Realizing Rights.

Because Global Programs has a single management structure, Global Program APMRs tend to be more uniform than those of the Country and Regional Programs. The program structure has been

more fluid over time, so there is less a sense of fixed programs with five-year strategic visions that can be used as a reference against which to measure strategic advances.

The annual GP planning process usually arrives at annual objectives for each GP and those serve as the yardstick against which the year's achievements are measured. These are not stated as a discrete list of separate objectives, so there is less of a sense of measuring progress on each objective. Each APMR arrives at an overall assessment comment about the program, rather than an progress assessment on each of several objectives or outcomes. Since there is no contracting cycle, it is easier for GPs to focus their assessment attention on the one-year period since the last plan was developed. This is more complicated for the Country and Regional Programs.

Global Program APMRs emphasize the strategic outcomes achieved during the year and the lessons learned in the pursuit of those outcomes. In that sense, they tend to be a bit more analytical, in general, than the country-level reports. Owing to the very different composition of the planning group, these reports tend to reflect less a report on a conversation that represents different points of view (voices) and organizational contributions, and more the output of a team process led by a manager ultimately responsible for reviewing the reports.

The APMR for the Communications Program stands out in many respects. First of all, many of its achievements are framed as activities or very specific and measureable outputs of the work, rather than outcomes. For example:

- Production and dissemination of global and regional strategic analysis outputs (18 policy briefs; 2 full reports; 1 annual review of the State of Rights and Resources; 3 new RRI Impact Stories; 2 New Tenure Trends; 3 Quarterly Newsletters; 9 monthly communications updates; RRI's first book compiling policy papers on Indian forestry; numerous global and regional level press releases; and 6 opinion pieces in prestigious media outlets
- Averaged 167+ website visits per day, and 4,600 per month with access from over 175+ countries (25% increase over monthly average in 2011). Engagement with followers on Facebook and Twitter has increased by 120% from February 2012.

In addition, the Communications report includes a summary of the results of a full external communications audit carried out during 2012. The central conclusion of that audit is summarized in the following excerpt, reproduced in the APMR.

> "To its credit, RRI has largely avoided these pitfalls [losing track of communications and its importance..] until now. As the organization grows in size, budget, and complexity, it is important that the leadership of the organization ensures that this positive corporate culture -- that is conducive to communications -- does not change. In particular, the resources and capacity of communications program needs to continue increasing to keep up with a rapidly expanding organization and to take RRI's communications to the next level."

To the knowledge of the IM team, this is the first program-level external evaluation that RRI has commissioned. The report provides the foundation for the creation of comprehensive communications strategy for the second framework period.

The APMR for Alternative Tenure and Enterprise Models (ATEMs) provides a very different view of that program in a report with precisely the same format. Achievements are couched in much more general terms, even though they do not reference any over-arching ATEMs strategy for FP I. For example,

> *From an analytical point of view, progress has been made through the work done by RRI partner, RECOFTC, in their evaluation of the types of regulatory barriers that exclude or deter small holder participation in the formal market. The 2012 RRI publication, What Rights?, provides country-level analysis on the rights to commercialize timber and non-timber forest products.*

This reference also cites the work of an RRI Partner in the achievement of a strategic advance in a Global Program. This attention to collaboration between RRG and RRI Partners and Collaborators in the achievement of Global Program goals represents an emerging trend in GP reporting and (one assumes) implementation.

APMRs originating in Global Programs all devote space and attention to identifying constraints to program progress and, in some cases, to teasing out the implications of those constraints. The APMR of the Rights and Climate program draws the following conclusion:

> *A major challenge in 2012 has been that the momentum behind REDD+ has noticeably waned and to date there has been insufficient focus among major REDD actors to address the fundamental drivers of deforestation. There also remains inadequate attention among these actors for the clarification and securitization of local forest tenure and enhancing local forest management. In the context of diminished enthusiasm for Carbon markets, the main REDD actors have been moving to recalibrate their strategies and priorities to identify how to best address the major drivers of deforestation, namely working more closely with major private sector actors and focusing on improving the quality of forest-product supply chains. However, it remains RRI's job to ensure that with these new priorities, their attention to issues of community land rights will increase, rather than decline.*

In a few short words, this excerpt outlines the central strategic foundations of the most significant of the proposed "New Directions" for RRI strategy in the second Framework period. It also positions RRI—keeping the world's eyes on the prize of tenure reform as the focus shifts— in relation to this perceived trend in a way that is clearer than much discussion on this topic.

Finally, the APMR on Tenure Analysis states one achievement in a way that presents the outcome as a challenge to future implementation.

> *While it was a stated objective of RRI to position itself as a major interlocutor on issues of tenure reform in the DRC, there was no way to anticipate the how quickly the profile of RRI's Tenure Baseline Study process was to actually increase. RRI will now have a significant*

opportunity to influence the land reform process and contribute robust analytical support; however, this opportunity also comes with elevated expectations among a broad set of actors in the country for the outcome of the work. RRI can therefore leverage this heightened interest to build on the established methodology by expanding the research to more provinces and more sites within the provinces in order to maximize the quality of the data as well as the applicability of the findings at both a national and local level. This will also require a concerted strengthening of the research coalition around the outcomes of the study as well as the development of new alliances with government, private sector actors, and influential embassies.

This suggests that RRI was so successful at getting its tenure tracking protocols accepted and adopted by other institutions that the acceptance actually outpaced the Initiative's capacity to respond to the resulting expectations of those institutions for real-time analysis and information. Because this same achievement is named by RRI as a Milestone along the path to one of its Strategic Outcomes, the IM team has attempted to validate this claim with mixed results. Assuming that this claim of rapid acceptance of the RRI approach can be fully validated, this names a truly transformational outcome for a network focused on tenure reform, and it also raises the question of RRI's capacity to capitalize on the opportunities it creates.

As suggested at the beginning of this section, validation of the APMRs requires program-level research that is outside the scope of the current IM exercise. In the absence of such "selective validation" by the IM, the only validation of the APMRs is that done by RRG regional staff, in the case of the country-level reports and by the Global Programs Manager, in the case of the GP reports. In this report, we have received the APMRs, confirmed that they contain the data they are designed to collect and made a few comparative comments on their content.

Strategic Response Mechanism (SRM)

The opportunistic grants approved and made by RRG outside of the Initiative's formal planning process in response to proposals for immediate action on tenure reform are called the Initiative's Strategic Response Mechanism. The grants are quite diverse in nature, but the creation of this category of grants responded to RRI's desire for the flexibility to allow it to respond in an agile way to perceived strategic opportunities. Some of these grants go to existing Partners or Collaborators for activities that were not anticipated during the formal planning process, while others initiate a relationship between RRI and an implementing organization. Occasionally, an SRM grant will be used to support work in a country where the Initiative has not previously been active, thereby opening the door to the creation of a national platform there. The ratio, over time, of SRM grants to total RRI contractual grant transfers to implementing organizations is represented in Table 5, below.

Table 5
Ratio of SRM grants to total RRI grants

Year	SRM Contracts	Total Contracts	%
2008	$119.000	394,955	30.13
2009	110,871	2,734,300	4.05
2010	442,739	3,037,964	14.57
2011	422,727	3,026,859	13.96
2012	297,693	3,629,051	8.20
TOTAL	1,273,178	12,823,129	9.92

Given the nature of SRMs, these grants are generally held to an even higher standard of strategic potential than grants contracted via the RRI planning process. At least one of the SRM grants this year, the one made to Epistema in Indonesia, has achieved the very important purpose of keeping RRI fully engaged with the "road map" process there.

Despite the decline in SRM grants for 2012, so-called "SRMs" have become an important part of RRI's contracting practice, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of total contractual transfers. To date, the IM team has had very little participation in the monitoring of the Strategic Response Mechanism, and the Contract Reports are the only way in which RRI's internal monitoring system gathers information related to the mission critical outputs of specific SRM-supported activities. On two occasions, RRG asked the IM to report on SRM's. This was done, but not in a way that assesses the overall contribution of SRM-supported activities to the mission of the Initiatives. The monitoring system for SFP II should take SRM grants into account in a more systematic way, and the methodology of any mid-term evaluation should reflect the need to assess the long-term impact of this important mechanism.

VI.   RRI RESPONSE TO THE 2011 INDEPENDENT MONITOR RECOMMENDATIONS

KMSC RECOMMENDATION ONE: RRI should take all necessary steps to insure that the appropriate government and civil society parties in Indonesia follow-up on commitments made relative to creating and implementing a road map to forest tenure reform in Indonesia. As reported above, RRI played a pivotal role in the process leading to the government declaring its wish to agree on a road map to reform, so it is important that the Initiative remain involved in the follow-up. The 2012 RRI country planning process in Indonesia did not allocate funds to support the continued operation of the CSO platform that helped move this discussion

forward in Indonesia, so RRI must encourage a re-thinking of the country program and/or find other ways to supplement national efforts (perhaps using the Strategic Response Mechanism).

RRG RESPONSE: In November 2011, RRG approved a Strategic Response Mechanism proposal from Epistema Institute to coordinate the CSO network's advocacy efforts with the aim to facilitate adoption of the official Roadmap document by the Ministry of Forestry. This resulted in strategic and synergistic action by the CSOs to create a policy environment for reforms that are comprehensive, permanent, coordinated and rapid, with clear and measurable initiatives. Concurrently, an MoU was signed in September 2011 between AMAN (Indigenous Alliance of the Archipelago) and the National Land Agency to explore forest reforms within the agrarian sector, expand the comprehensiveness of the Roadmap, and facilitate a policy framework for registering customary (*adat*) lands.

Notable achievements of the CSO Roadmap to date are as follows:
- In April 2012, the Ministry of Forestry issued a decree establishing a Preparatory Unit for the Macro Plan of Forestry Tenure, commonly known as the Working Group on Forest Tenure. This team has five primary tasks: 1) to develop a forest tenure reform plan; 2) to hold public meetings and consultations with key stakeholders as input into developing the plan; 3) to identify and map conflicts over forest tenure; 4) to assess past management of such conflicts; and 5) to formulate alternative conflict resolution mechanisms. It is the first multi-stakeholder team of its kind, and includes representatives of line ministries, civil society and indigenous organizations, and forestry associations.
- The CSOs have recently agreed to work in parallel to a new Ministry of Forestry mechanism to strengthen adaptation to climate change in forest areas, with a main focus on developing strategies and collecting lessons learned from previous national initiatives, coupled with fieldwork on conflict resolution for the 33,000 villages with unresolved tenure. The CSOs have identified ten model villages, in which strategies for conflict resolution will be piloted. This initiative was supported by funds from the RRI 2012 planning process, which supplemented the late-2011 SRM.
- The Ministry of Forestry has added a tenure and conflict function to several departments and pledged IDR 5 billion (slightly over $500,000) to support a new conflict resolution unit. This presents a key opportunity for the CSOs to provide guidance to the Ministry and continue developing support to local government agencies for conflict resolution at the district level.

Due to the progress made on the CSO Roadmap movement during 2012, it was agreed that maintaining the momentum of the Roadmap should be the primary objective of the Indonesia program for 2013. A number of activities are currently being developed to this end, with supporting interventions that contribute to the three primary Roadmap goals.

KMSC Comment: RRG certainly gave close attention to this recommendation, not because it was mentioned by the IM, but because Indonesia is a critical country in the effort to reverse deforestation, and the RRI country platform feels that it has a very important opportunity before it.

The RRG account (echoed, in its essence, by the Indonesia Annual Program Monitoring Report) is consistent with our understanding of what happened during 2012 in relation to the roadmap to tenure reform in Indonesia. This was a creative and strategic use of the Strategic Response Mechanism by Epistema and RRG. An important breakthrough had occurred in 2011, in part due to facilitation provided by RRI. The IM team's analysis of the 2012 RRI country program in Indonesia suggested that the partners recognized the roadmap, but follow-up on that extraordinary opportunity was not prominent in any of the partner-proposed workplans. Several interviewees pointed out this apparent paradox during the research for the 2011 IM Report. That continued attention to the roadmap has become a clear priority of the country program in 2013 is a highly positive sign. It remains to be seen to what extent this is a serious commitment on the part of the Indonesian government, but RRI's continuing attention to the opportunity is entirely in keeping with its overall strategic approach.

By all accounts, other donors have recognized the importance of the roadmap process and are beginning to provide resources to it. This is precisely the sort of leveraging effect that RRI seeks from its work. The IM Team assumes that the local RRI platform will remain engaged with this process, regardless of who is providing the resources.

KMSC RECOMMENDATION TWO: As part of the development of a new Framework Proposal, RRI should give additional consideration to the idea of multi-year contracts with Partner and Collaborators, where appropriate. RRI delayed consideration of this recommendation until this year, when the new Framework Proposal will be prepared. If RRI is going to consider transferring resources to Partners and Collaborators according to the current modalities, then it should open the possibility of multi-year contracts, where appropriate. The current arrangement creates certain obstacles to "agility" in resource decisions, and multi-year contracts would not dramatically change that reality.

RRG RESPONSE: This issue was discussed at the RRI Strategy Meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand in April 2012. It was agreed and recorded that under the current modalities, RRI could permit multi-year activities if they demonstrate strategic value year to year. However, funding and contracting will remain on an annual basis as per the requirements of our donors. This decision allows RRI Partners and Collaborators to pursue long-term interventions, while ensuring (through annual assessment and review during the planning process) that the organization does not violate its funding protocols. This matter has been clarified in the planning guidance note and communicated to Partners and Collaborators.

KMSC Comment: This has been a recurring topic of conversation within RRI in each of the past three years, and the action reported by RRG, especially the conversation in Bangkok, effectively closes the discussion. RRG has given the possibility of multi-year contracting serious consideration and has discussed the matter with donors. It is unfortunate that a more flexible resolution could not be reached with all parties. The current contracting cycle allows multi-year programming in the context of annual contracting, so the flexibility reported by RRG does not represent a significant adjustment to the status quo.

One reason cited for the Secretariat's inability to consider multi-year funding commitments is the increasing inflexibility of donors to the Initiative. In other contexts, RRG points to multi-year contracting as a potential hindrance to the Initiative's strategic "agility." Whatever the justification for the annual contracting cycle, this will continue to hinder the Initiative's planning, monitoring and implementation efforts.

KMSC RECOMMENDATION THREE: RRI should build upon the improvements in Global Program restructuring achieved in 2011 by further rationalizing program structure and implementing a planning and internal monitoring structure that more closely approximates that of Country and Regional Programs. Global Program structure should further distinguish between areas of program development (Rights and Climate Change, ATEMs, Realizing Rights, etc.) and core strategies or lines of intervention that may apply to all programs (Network Building, Forest Tenure Conferences, Dialogues, Advocacy/Policy Influence, Local Capacity Building, etc.). Communications is clearly one area that could be managed as either a program or core strategy. Whatever it decides its programs are, RRI should create a budget for each program, assign a cross-functional team to take responsibility to realize program outcomes and establish a monitoring protocol for the program like those being followed by each Country and Regional program (Annual planning meeting with strong assessment component, Annual Program Monitoring Report, Annual Budget Proposal). If RRI has identified the correct program areas, then progress in program areas is mission-critical and the Core Strategies are strategies for achieving that progress. With such a structure, managing and defining relationships within the three dimensional matrix formed by Country and Regional Programs, Global Programs and Core Strategies/Key Approaches emerges more clearly as a key element of senior management function.

RRG RESPONSE: The RRI planning guidance note was revised in 2012 and took effect during the 2013 planning meetings, where representatives from RRI Partner and Collaborator organizations came together to determine both Regional and Global Programs in one set of meetings in Washington, DC. Sessions were held in similar format for both sets of meetings. The Global Programs component included sessions on the Communications, Networking Support, and Strategic Analysis (Tenure Analysis) programs as well as the themes of Rights and Climate, Realizing Rights and ATEMs.

Global and Country/Regional Programs undergo much of the same planning and monitoring processes. Parallel strategies and budget/activity workplans are developed for each Global Program and theme, and in 2012, APMRs were developed for all Global Programs and themes in addition to priority country programs.

KMSC COMMENT: Considerable progress has been made in "harmonizing" RRI planning processes across Global Programs, on one hand, and Country and Regional Programs, on the other. The application of common monitoring procedures has been an important aspect of this harmonization. As long as Global Programs are not subject to a contracting process akin to grantmaking, and RRG drives Global Programs, there will be important differences between these two types of programs.

The decision to hold Regional Planning meetings alongside the Global Planning meeting in Washington, and to invite select Collaborators to both, certainly moves the planning processes closer together. It is not clear, however, how sustainable that arrangement will prove to be.

There is still room for additional formality in the Global Planning process, but the IM team recognizes RRG's efforts to implement this recommendation.

KMSC RECOMMENDATION FOUR: At least three important outcome areas appear within RRI's Strategic Outcome #5. As it develops a strategy for the next period, RRI should give special attention to its real capacity to contribute to enduring change in each of these areas (rights-sensitive conservation models, pro-community governance regimes and alternative enterprise models) and lay out clear lines of intervention to achieve that change. RRI will certainly reach the projected number of Milestones related to this very broad outcome, but, while generally acceptable, the substantiation of those achievements has been less compelling than what exists for some other outcomes. The Initiative has rightly identified the importance of each of these areas to progress on tenure reform, but for a variety of reasons, has had difficulty focusing sufficient resources on these areas to generate demonstrable change. If this is simply a capacity question, then RRI should not identify Strategic Outcomes for itself in these areas. If there is capacity to move forward in all of these areas, then the emerging strategy must point the way to that forward movement with very specific strategies and progress markers.

RRG RESPONSE: In the RRI Framework Proposal II (2013-2017), the areas covered in Outcome #5 have been reconfigured into the following Outputs:

> Output 2: Market, trade, investment or conservation legislation and policies adopted or implemented by governments that strengthen Indigenous Peoples and local communities' rights, enterprises, benefits and incomes in a subset of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. **Impact weighting 20%**

> Output 4: Private sector entities actively support tenure and governance-related reforms, and support community-governed production and management in the countries where they operate. **Impact weighting 20%**

For each of these outputs there are specific indicators and sources of verification.

KMSC COMMENT: This recommendation suggested that RRI's Strategic Outcome #5 was not a helpful basis for program monitoring and learning because it combined three complex and apparently important areas of work in a single outcome statement. SO5 was stated as, "More equitable forest governance, enterprise and conservation models are identified and disseminated and/or more broadly supported as a viable approach to support social and economic development." The recommendation suggested that too many different types of achievements could be referenced to claim progress under this outcome. It could also be said that "identified and disseminated and/or broadly supported" was a vague standard for what needed to be achieved in this area.

RRG responds that it has corrected this in the design of a new log-frame for FP II and cites two separate output statements that address the problem. An analysis of the new Logical Framework for FP II is well beyond the scope of the current study, but it is clear to the IM team that Output 4 mentioned above is a new area of endeavor expressing RRI's commitment to a reframing of its relationship with the private sector. As such it is not clearly connected to this recommendation.

Output 2 still contains all three areas of action that were previously grouped in SO5. There is, however, one major difference between Output 2 in the new Logical Framework and the current SO5. Desired achievements in these areas are limited, in the new Log-Frame, to "legislation and policies adopted and implemented by governments." This is much more specific than what was intended by SO5 in the current Log-Frame, but it suggests quite a significant change in what RRI seeks to achieve in these areas.

This recommendation by the IM asked RRI to decide in its planning for FP II if it retained its strategic commitment to:

- Developing, supporting and testing Alternative Tenure and Enterprise Models as answers to the dominant private concessions model;
- Engaging the conservation sector in the creations of new models of conservation that promote, rather than undermine, the human rights of forest communities; and
- Advocating for the adoption and implementation of community-friendly forest governance models that promote the realization of community tenure rights.

If RRI retained the commitment to one or more of these areas, then it should not combine those ambitions in general statements of intent, but specifically state its intent in each area. The new Log-Frame is more specific about its intent in each of these areas (legislation and adoption of progressive policies by government), but, in the judgment of the IM team, it still does not provide solid strategic guidance for the implementation of these programmatic priorities.

VII.   2012 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This monitoring instrument was originally designed as a tool for the exclusive use of RRG's senior management and the RRG Board of Directors. It rests on the assumption that, in a network as complex as RRI, annual outcomes at the program level should be complemented by the establishment of overall organizational priorities to guide senior management's overall leadership function. Since the launch of RRI, each December senior management has held an assessment discussion in which they review progress on the previous year's priorities and set priorities for the coming year. According to the Initiative's internal monitoring system protocols, this discussion would become an important part of the internal monitoring effort. Senior management would document the results of its discussion and share those results with the Board of Directors as part of the board book for the January governance meetings. The only monitoring role for the IM team would be to confirm that the monitoring and priority-setting conversation took place, that the document had been delivered to the RRG Board and that the agenda for the January board meeting included a discussion of the senior management findings concerning past-year implementation and the new priorities established for the coming year.

This year, the Terms of Reference for the IM exercise included "validation" of management's conclusions in regard to 2012 implementation. Even a partial validation of the management findings has turned out to be impractical, given the timing of the creation of the report and the nature of the IM Team's access to the review process. [8]

As it has in past years, the IM Team can confirm that senior management has reviewed progress on 2012 priorities, and that the reflection led to the establishment of organizational priorities for 2013. Those priorities are included in the January board book.

Originally, the Organizational Priorities were envisioned as a kind of "dashboard" for senior management, i.e., a selective list of its overall management priorities for the year, with some sort of indicator of success that management could easily track during the year and use at year's end to determine whether or not the desired progress had been achieved. As with all of the monitoring tools, it was hoped that management's assessment discussion would also address important unplanned outcomes and any opportunities that, as senior management, it might not have fully exploited.

The dashboard was to be flexible and open to adjustment over the course of a busy year. Senior management, itself, would monitor progress (and make changes) during occasional check-ins on the dashboard during the year, and in its year-end discussion. In this case, it would be the Board, rather than the IM or any other actor, who would validate management's findings. The validation would take the form of questions and comments in a dialogue about results, rather than in-depth research to determine the veracity of management's claims. The use of this sort of dashboard is quite common in complex organizations.

As this instrument has evolved in RRI's practice, it has come to include a few "Overarching Priorities," but these priorities each tend to be quite broad and are often multidimensional. The priorities are usually not accompanied by any sort of progress markers, so the monitoring conclusions tend to also be general in nature. The annual priorities document has also become the place where senior management informs the board about RRI progress on program level outcomes. The Board is probably quite happy to have these program-level reports, but it feels duplicative to the IM team and presents a level of detail that may not be necessary for the Board on an annual basis. Whether the Board needs this level of reporting or not, including program-level reports, operates against the idea of a compact "dashboard" of a few priorities and indicators to which senior management is paying special attention over the course of the year.

It is the sense of the IM Team that neither the senior management nor the Board has used the annual Organizational Priorities as a monitoring tool, in accordance with the original intention of the internal monitoring protocols developed in 2010. This may well have been for good reason, but is not clear to the IM Team whether the original intention was considered, and then rejected as overly burdensome, not useful or unworkable, or if the original intention was just not clear from the outset. This may be a good example of inadequate clarity and discussion around the internal monitoring protocols at the time of their development.

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[8] In order to have as full a view of the year's implementation as possible, the senior management discussion takes place in mid-December. The IM team requested the opportunity to observe the discussion (remotely) and, therefore, resolve any questions that arose, on the spot. Because of scheduling issues related to management travel schedules, this was impossible.

In general, the data provided in the Organizational Priorities document can be read as a summary of the data included in the Annual Program Monitoring Reports, the Milestone Reports and other internal monitoring reports. To the extent that this is true, then the earlier comments in this report concerning the validation of that data pertain to this document, as well.

There are two exceptions to this generalization that deserve mention. In the Organizational Priorities report to the Board, RRG claims to have made progress in 9 of 16 "target countries." This is an impressive result, in a single year. Of those 9 countries in which either "substantial" or "significant" progress was made, the IM Team received Annual Program Monitoring Reports from 5 countries (Cameroon, Lao PDR, Liberia, India and Indonesia). RRG filed a Milestone report on its work in the DRC, but the progress achieved during 2012 in China, Colombia and Peru was not captured in this year's monitoring reports. In theory, RRG staff develops an Annual Program Monitoring Report on any country in which a country planning team conducts an annual planning discussion leading to concept notes and the transfer of RRI funds to the national platform.[9] The IM Team has no doubt that important progress occurred in these countries, but it is noteworthy that the monitoring instruments created by RRG and reviewed by the IM have not captured this important progress. In that context, validating the claims in the Organizational Priorities report would be very difficult for the IM team or any monitoring group.

Finally, the report on progress on 2012 priorities confirms that a "streamlined Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning system has been developed for FP II." During its interviews, the IM Team was informed by external consultants of work undertaken in relation to rationalizing some of the existing monitoring instruments, but the IM Team cannot validate the existence of a streamlined system for FP II. Given the Terms of Reference for the current exercise, information regarding new monitoring and evaluation protocols would certainly have been a welcome and important input to this report. If such a streamlining exercise has taken place in isolation from the Independent Monitoring process, this, once again, raises the issue of the integration of RRI's strategic cycle interventions.

RRG senior management has overall priorities for its work each year. The Initiative's original internal monitoring protocols suggested only that management formalize these priorities as a way of providing clearer internal guidance to its own work in the course of each year. Internal (and confidential) discussion of progress on priorities might also provide the basis of effective management self-assessment, an extremely important ongoing support to management. The RRG Board, which includes both Partner representatives and well-informed independent members, is in an excellent position to dialogue with senior management about the content of these priorities and about management's reported assessment of its progress. Such a discussion should be a true dialogue, rather than any sort of calling to account. The current documentation and discussion of annual organizational priorities stimulates such a dialogue, to a limited degree, but it is the opinion of the IM Team that this particular monitoring tool could provide much more value, without significant additional effort on anyone's part.

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[9] The APMR is intended as a summary of the results of that discussion, not a staff-researched assessment of program progress.

VIII. KEY INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL OBSTACLES

This year's IM Terms of Reference instruct the IM Team to "identify internal and external obstacles to progress and make recommendations to address those obstacles." This could occupy several IM teams for a period much longer than the one dedicated to this project. For a network implementing such a variety of projects and programs in radically different contexts, there are literally dozens, if not hundreds, of obstacles to progress. Luckily, there is a remarkable consensus among the sources consulted for this project concerning some of the key external obstacles faced by RRI, as a whole. The Blue Sky meetings conducted by RRI in 2011, and the analysis and discussions that followed those meetings seemed to create the basis of a broad consensus, at least among RRG and most RRI Partners, concerning those external threats, including:

1. The continuing global economic crisis, which erodes foreign assistance budgets and intensifies the challenges faced by alternative community forest enterprises seeking to sustain themselves;
2. The lack of political will in the industrialized countries to seriously address the looming challenges of climate change, even as the challenges begin to manifest themselves in those very industrialized countries;
3. The failure, to date, of REDD or REDD+ mechanisms to effectively address the primary drivers of deforestation, and the related failure of the long-awaited private market in carbon to materialize on a scale that can begin to provide adequate financing for environmental services in the heavily-forested countries of the Global South;
4. The surge in global commodity prices and the accompanying explosion in demand for the land, mineral and other resources present in Africa, Asia and Latin America, leading to the trend toward large-scale land acquisitions across those continents;
5. In the context of the race for resources across the Global South, national political environments that strongly favor the extension of resource concessions to private interests over respect for the tenure rights of forest communities, even where there is formal legal recognition of those rights;
6. Climate change, itself, and the havoc it is beginning to wreak on fragile ecosystems— including forest ecosystems--across a wide variety of geographies; and, last, but not least,
7. The ongoing exclusion of women from the benefits of tenure rights, even where those rights exist for men, and, in some cases, the stubborn resistance to women's demands that their voices be heard in movements for tenure reform.

These obstacles express themselves in a dizzying variety of forms across the myriad landscapes in which the work of RRI plays itself out both on the global stage and in diverse national environments. Framework Proposal II emerges as a combination of continuity and "New Directions" for RRI, in response to these and other perceived obstacles and an equally complex set of opportunities seen to be emerging alongside them.

Not surprisingly, the relative agreement concerning the global obstacles faced by the Initiative is not replicated in all discussions about the internal obstacles that RRI must overcome in the next period. Among the internal obstacles that the IM Team has heard mentioned most often are:

1. While RRI is a magnet for uniquely capable and experienced people and organizations, the network, as a whole, faces enormous challenges regarding lack of capacity, at all levels, to confront obstacles on the scale of those outlined above;

2. The same diversity of membership that is a real strength of the RRI network also gives rise to a network containing organizations (national CBOs, national NGOs, international NGOs, university-based research organizations, independent research centers, global secretariat, etc.) that are positioned very differently vis a vis issues of tenure reform on the ground in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This diversity of positioning can, in some cases, imply varying perspectives on particular tenure reform processes and create challenges around facilitating coherent collective responses;

3. In practice, one of RRG's key roles is that of financial intermediary between a set of large funding organizations and an extensive network of organizations doing national, regional and global work on tenure reform. This role provides critical resources for tenure reform and alternative development work as well as important incentives for participation in RRI, but it also can act in contradiction to RRG's other role as leader and facilitator of a global advocacy network able to act strategically and opportunistically at the local level.

4. RRG's strong collective leadership introduces a subjective factor that contributes much to RRI's unique ability to energize tenure reform from multiple platforms. RRG and RRI are both exceedingly dependent on this small number of people;

5. While RRI has done much to promote women's participation and leadership in the global struggle for tenure reform, the network is not immune to the gender dynamics described above as a key external obstacle;

6. Given the complexity of the RRI network and the tasks it addresses, RRI's systems of internal analysis and learning will be as important to its success, in the long run, as its ability to analyze and act upon its external, tenure reform context. RRI has made significant investment in strategic cycle interventions (planning, monitoring and evaluation) resulting in important advances in each area, but growth in strategic-cycle capacity continues to lag behind other strategic analysis capabilities and will eventually act as a brake on the network's development…if it is not already doing so.

The Recommendations section of the report focuses particularly on addressing some of these internal obstacles.

IX. CUMULATIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL PERIOD I

Quite distinct from previous IM exercises, the 2012 IM Terms of Reference instruct the IM Team to include elements of a "cumulative and comprehensive assessment" in this report. This is difficult to accomplish without blurring the boundary between an annual monitoring exercise and

the end-of-term evaluation of a program or project. As will be apparent from the Recommendations section of this report, we believe that a "final" evaluation of RRI's implementation in FP I would be an important exercise, and the current exercise is emphatically not that evaluation.

1. <u>Comment on the extent to which RRI achieved its Project Objectives during the first Framework Proposal period.</u>

This is an ambitious task to which the IM team is able to offer a few reflections from the Independent Monitoring perspective. By "Project Objectives," we understand RRI to mean the Development Objective/Goal and the Project Objective/Purpose included in the original Logical Framework for FP 1.

The Development Objective/Goal was:

> *Contribute to reducing poverty, enhancing well-being and strengthening democratic governance and development in forest areas of developing countries.*

As its Project Objective/Purpose, RRI identified:

> *Accelerate the establishment of more equitable forest tenure and related policies in priority developing countries, leading to reduced poverty and violent conflict in forest areas, advancement of human and civil rights, increased contribution of industry and markets to social and economic development, and strengthened conditions for restoring the ecological integrity of forests, and mitigation and adaptation to climate change.*

The four monitoring exercises performed by various KMSC Monitoring Teams have uncovered incontrovertible evidence that RRI has beyond any question fulfilled both the Development Objective and the Project Objective, as written. There can be no doubt that RRI has contributed to reducing poverty, enhancing well-being and strengthening democratic governance in the countries in which it has worked. Measuring changes in poverty levels within forest communities has proven to be a great challenge, and the story is different in each country, but both independent and internal monitoring have turned up many examples of progress in each of these areas over the past four years. Similarly, while RRI cannot point to the acceleration of tenure reform processes in every country in which it has worked, tenure reform processes have certainly advanced (or efforts to roll back tenure gains have been defeated) in a critical mass of those countries. The question, of course, is the extent of these achievements.

In the Logical Framework methodology being used by RRI (and in most Logical Frameworks), the organization was not required to indicate how it would measure progress on its overall goal. RRI did, however, provide two "Objective measureable and verifiable indicators" by which it would be possible to discern whether or not RRI was achieving its purpose. They were:

Forest area under local ownership and administration doubled by 2015, with secure rights to conserve, use and trade in products and services

Poverty incidence reduced by half by 2015 in the forested areas of the world.

These dramatic and clearly defined indicators became the subject of much discussion when RRI turned to the design of its internal monitoring system in early 2010. At that time, RRI decided that it did not want to measure its success solely on the basis of these two indicators. Instead, RRI would establish a set of desired "Strategic Outcomes" that would each be connected to an outcome indicator and measureable markers of progress or Milestones. The two global indicators above would be retained, but as outcome indicators related to two of the Strategic Outcomes, one focused on tenure reform and the other on implementing new alternative economic models that would lead to poverty reduction. In designing indicators for Strategic Outcomes, RRI opted for numbers of countries in which tenure reform was advancing and numbers of countries in which alternative economic models were advanced.

RRI Global Programs continued to develop its methodology for tracking tenure reform and to consider how to best demonstrate a relationship between tenure reform and poverty. In the area of tenure tracking, progress was made to the point that RRI's tracking methodology is being widely disseminated, commented upon and even adopted by global institutions that track changes in land tenure.[10] In its report, "Respecting Rights, Delivering Development," RRI offers a details description of its methodology and reports that, since 2005, the percentage of forested land under community management has increased from 11% to 15% percent, globally. This represents a notable increase of 36%, but still far less than the doubling of forested land under community management by 2015 that RRI originally projected.

RRI has faced more daunting challenges in the area of measuring changes in the incidence of poverty in forested areas. The Initiative has worked with its Partner, International Forestry Resources and Institutions (IFRI), to develop an approach to overlaying maps of forest tenure and poverty in ways that will confirm the correlation between the two, if one exists. According to both RRI and IFTI, it will be some time before this approach can generate data to track RRI interventions to changes in poverty incidence in forested areas.

RRI has, then, continued to pay great attention to the two "global indicators" identified in its original log-frame, even those these indicators were not prominent in the revised log-frame. This appears to the IM team as a very good example in which the actual implementation priorities of RRI diverged from those highlighted in the log-frame that served as the primary reference for both internal and independent monitoring. The log-frame could have been revised, again, to take this into account, but it was not. As a result, monitoring progress on these indicators was not at the center of reporting by either RRI monitoring staff or the Independent Monitor, even though advances in forested land under community management was considered to be an important

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[10] See Section IV, above, on Measuring Progress on the Achievement of RRI's Strategic Outcomes, in which the IM team analyzes RRG's claim of important progress in this regard.

achievement by RRI and was reported, as such, to the donors. There is every indication that a close examination of this indicator could have provided a revealing vantage point from which to monitor the impact of RRI's work on the real tenure situation of forest communities.[11]

In any case, the logic behind the revised RRI Logical Framework for SP I was that the Initiative would demonstrate its attainment of its Objectives by demonstrating progress on its Strategic Outcomes. It is from this perspective that the IM Team is able to offer some assessment of RRI's project toward objectives. Table 3, above, becomes relevant, once more, for evaluating that progress, as it indicates the extent to which RRI has documented success in reaching its identified Milestones. We reproduce that table, here.

Table 3
RRI Milestones Achieved vs. Benchmarks Established, 2008-2012

Out-come	Outcome Indicator	Progress Marker For 2012	Achieved as of end of 2012	+/-
SO1	Number of effective value-added joint actions facilitated/organized	20	10	-10
SO2	Number of engaged networks becoming more capable of influencing tenure policy	6	6	0
SO3	Number of key tenure policy institutions changing policies or practices	5	5	0
SO4	Number of countries adopting/advancing legal/legislative reforms	6	5	-1
SO5	Number of countries in which more equitable tenure/enterprise models increase community access to markets/resources	5	4	-1

These Strategic Outcomes constructed by RRI in its revised Log-Frame identified three pre-conditions of the needed reforms (effective pro-tenure collaborations created by RRI, engaged and effective policy networks and altered policy perspectives within key institutions), one outcome related to tenure/governance reform and another related to generating new production models that increase community access to resources.

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[11] It appears that the Logical Framework for FP II has restored this indicator to its rightful place at the center of the Initiative's monitoring effort. Changes in the percentage of global forest cover under community management result from a variety of inputs, so the analysis of RRI's contribution to these changes should yield rich analysis of the ways in which RRI's efforts complement those of other actors in the realization of complex and critical outcomes. See http://www.internationalpeaceandconflict.org/profiles/blogs/exploring-contribution-analysis#.UNhD_ncn1fU for an interesting brief analysis of how the discipline of "contribution analysis" might be used to analyze cause and effect in peace-building efforts.

Over the past four years, the IM's monitoring of data presented by RRI reaches the final conclusions.

1. **RRI has facilitated the desired volume of productive, advocacy collaborations in the service of tenure reform, but, with the permission of the RRG Board, it did not fully document those Milestones;**
2. **With RRI support, the desired number of civil society and governmental networks have shown increased capacity to influence tenure policy in a positive direction;**
3. **RRI targeted and then successfully influenced the tenure policy positioning of the desired number of major institutions influencing forest tenure outcomes;**
4. **RRI national platforms successfully and demonstrably advanced tenure reform processes in five countries, but had projected that it would do so in six countries. In this latest set of Milestone reports, RRI claimed to have made such progress in the DRC, but the monitoring team concluded that this evident success represented a very valuable RRI-inspired collaboration, rather than the advance of a conscious pro-community tenure agenda by an RRI platform in that country;**
5. **RRI committed itself to substantially increase community access to resources via more equitable tenure/enterprise models in five countries. It fulfilled this commitment with its report on progress in Liberia in 2012.**

Table 3 is a summary of Table 6, below, which presents a complete list of all Milestones claimed by RRG and validated by the IM Team during FP I.

Table 6
RRI Strategic Outcome Milestones for the period 2008-12[12]

Out-come	Identification	Summary of RRI Monitoring Hypothesis	Yr. Rep.
SO1	National Forestry Alliance in Guatemala	RRI helped facilitate the formation of an unprecedented alliance of forest communities from the Western Highlands and from the Petén, a large lowland department in northern Guatemala.	2010
SO1	Tenure reform coalition in Cameroon	With RRI's help, an important coalition of NGOs and forest community groups has emerged in Cameroon with the goals of protecting traditional community rights and advocating for a rights-sensitive national Forestry Law. The RRI-sponsored forest tenure conference in Yaoundé in May 2009 boosted the coalition's efforts to influence debate on a new Forest Law.	2010
SO1	Global Rights and Climate Dialogues	In concert with a variety of other actors, RRI has organized a series of global policy dialogues highlighting the centrality of the rights agenda to any serious effort to address forest degradation. These dialogues helped reinsert rights issues into REDD debates and placed the question of REDD safeguards on the screens of key REDD actors.	2010

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[12] Note that because reporting on Strategic Outcome Milestones began in 2010, RRI reported on Milestones for 2008, 2009 and 2010 in 2010

Out-come	Identification	Summary of RRI Monitoring Hypothesis	Yr. Rep.
SO1	Pro-Tenure Rights Coalition in Bolivia	RRI has facilitated the creation of a coalition committed to inject the rights-based concerns of Bolivia's lowland forest communities in national debates concerning forest governance. The coalition immediately helped channel indigenous concerns into the consideration of a new Autonomy Law.	2010
SO1	Tenure Champions in Burkina Faso	Under challenging conditions, RRI has helped identify a number of "tenure champions" committed to developing a joint agenda to advance tenure reform in Burkina Faso.	2010
SO1	NRM Federation in Nepal	Primarily through its national Partner, FECOFUN, RRI supported an effort to broaden the coalition of forest user groups coming together to defeat government efforts to "rollback" tenure rights.	2010
SO1	Yaoundé Tenure Reform Conference	RRG worked closely with the entire Africa Regional Program of RRI to deliver a regional tenure conference in Cameroon that not only influenced the tenure debate within that country, but resulted in the formation of a regional network of women community forest activists and raised the profile of the tenure reform debate, regionally.	2010
SO1	African Community Rights Network (ACRN)	Through its support for the creation and development of an African Community Rights Network, RRI has helped strengthen the African organizations participating in the network, and contributed to concrete results in the area of the promotion of community tenure rights.	2011
SO1	Indonesia Rights Debate	In 2011, under pressure from a number of sources inside and outside of Indonesia, the Ministry of Forestry publically expressed an awareness of the connection between forest tenure and climate change, and a willingness to consider recognizing the tenure rights of indigenous and other forest communities. Among the most important factors contributing to this outcome was ongoing work of a group of Indonesian NGOs that came together around RRI's Indonesia coalition to plan and coordinate the Lombok Forest tenure conference.	2011
SO1[13]	Catalyzing a Multi-Stakeholder Research Process on Tenure Reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	By mobilizing a broad-based research coalition of local, national and international NGOs and IOs from a variety of sectors and geographic specialty areas to develop and begin the implementation of a broad-based tenure baseline study, RRI has positioned itself as a primary interlocutor in ongoing and future discussions related to natural resource tenure reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).	2012

[13] RRG reported this Milestone in relation to SO4. The analysis of the IM Team confirms that this represents a Milestone for RRI, but that the Milestone is more closely related to SO1 than SO4.

Out-come	Identification	Summary of RRI Monitoring Hypothesis	Yr. Rep.
SO2	MegaFlorestais	RRI facilitated the creation and staffing of a network of senior forestry officials from many of the world's most-forested countries. The network has provided an informal platform for international dialogue on issues at the center of RRI's agenda, and has allowed for the formation of relationships that have influenced national tenure reform debates in several key national contexts.	2010
SO2	Network of Women Forest Activists in Africa	Among the attendees at RRI's Yaoundé conference in 2009 were a number of women activists interested in forming a regional network to provide information exchange and a forum for information exchange and joint action. While facing many challenges, REFACOF has continued to raise the profile of women's rights within the regional debate on the recognition of customary forest rights across Africa.	2010
SO2	Global Alliance of Community Forestry	RRI and some of its Partners came together to form this global network of community-based forestry organizations. The network provides a vehicle for the voice of forest communities in a variety of international spaces.	2010
SO2	Civil Society Advisory Group	After becoming a formal participant in a fairly ineffective network, RRI put energy into re-invigorating CSAG and making it a more effective voice for forest tenure reform within the ITTO structure.	2010
SO2	Next Generation	Through MegaFlorestais, RRI has gained access to an emerging generation of national level forestry leaders. A series of "Next Generation" programs organized by RRI have built network connections among these future leaders, increased their awareness of the tenure and governance issues and created the basis for future dialogue in service of a tenure reform agenda.	2011
SO2	Rethinking Forest Regulations	By involving them in this process, RRI has helped targeted forest agency leaders and civil society representatives develop a clearer understanding of regulatory options for increasing rural development and respecting local community and Indigenous Peoples' rights.	2012
SO3	ITTO	Over a period of years, RRI, both directly and through the Civil Society Advisory Group has developed strong relationships with a variety of key people within the ITTO. ITTO has teamed with RRI on a number important international events, and its policies and publications have evolved to show a much greater awareness of the contributions of community forestry.	2010
SO3	REDD Programme Policy Board	Seeing the importance of influencing the director of the UN REDD Programme, RRI has developed strong relationships with the Policy Board. Inputs from both RRI and the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) have contributed to notable shifts in the degree of sensitivity around safeguards and the importance of secure tenure rights to the REDD agenda.	2010

Out-come	Identification	Summary of RRI Monitoring Hypothesis	Yr. Rep.
SO3	Influencing Bilateral Aid Policy	Since RRI came into existence, two of the most important bilateral donors to climate change mitigation/adaptation (NORAD/NICFI and DFID) have gained a stronger appreciation for the importance of forest tenure reform to the success of any effort to control deforestation and forest degradation. RRI's engagement with both institutions has been a factor in the evolution of this perspective.	2011
SO3	UNFF Voluntary Agreement	The **United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF**) is an important multilateral forest policy body. Over a period of years, RRI has influenced the UNFF Secretariat and some Forum members with its arguments on community forest enterprises and other tenure-related issues. This engagement resulted in the Secretariat inviting RRI to present a policy paper on community forest enterprises at the Forum conference in January 2011. This reflects influence with the UNFF Secretariat and with some member governments.	2011
SO3	UN-FAO and the Influence of RRI Tenure Tracking	RRI's innovative and robust tenure tracking methodology and analytical products influenced FAO's forest tenure monitoring and has led to widespread adoption of RRI's tenure data findings by key actors in the forest and climate change arenas.	2012
SO4	Brazil	RRI engagement in Brazil, especially in relation to the 2007 conference co-sponsored with ITTO and GACF, was one factor in creating support in the Brazilian forestry administration for the creation of a Federal Program to provide economic support to community-based forest enterprises.	2010
SO4	China	Building on a long history of work by RRI Partner, Forest Trends, RRI has continued to contribute to the momentum for forest tenure reform there. Chinese officials have been active participants in MegaFlorestais, and events co-sponsored by RRI and Chinese institutions in 2008 and 2009 helped advance the pace of reform.	2010
SO4	Bolivia Land Legislation	Advocacy work undertaken by members of the RRI coalition influenced legislative debates on the Autonomy Law, the Integral Law on Development in the Amazon and other key legislation in favor of full recognition of the tenure rights of indigenous and *campesino* communities.	2011
SO4	Liberia Community Rights Law	Determined advocacy by RRI collaborators and their allies, led by SDI and Green Advocates, resulted in almost unanimous legislative support for a Community Rights Law, recognizing traditional community forest rights. The president refused to sign that law and had the law re-drafted and passed without many of its strongest provisions. RRI's local coalition continued to work with the government on implementation and achieved positive changes in the regulatory framework. The struggle to compel government implementation of the law continues.	2011

Out-come	Identification	Summary of RRI Monitoring Hypothesis	Yr. Rep.
SO5	Nepal	The local RRI coalition in Nepal, which includes the largest of the Federations of community forest user groups has played a key role in promoting the pro-tenure-reform position in the country's constitutional debates. The coalition has also led efforts to stand against government efforts to create new national parks or amend forestry laws to limit the existing rights of forest communities.	2010
SO5	Tenure reform and small-scale enterprise in China	Support for highly professional research has been a key RRI strategy in China. Over time, the research has supported the case for tenure reform in ways that have attracted the attention of policy makers and influenced policy outcomes.	2010
SO5	Nepal	Working closely with community forest user groups from around the country, the RRI coalition was able to influence the government debate on a set of proposals that would have had the effect of rolling back some existing protection of the rights of forest-dependent communities. Because people practicing community forestry tend to have greater access to markets and resources in other communities, that rollback would have had the effect of limiting that access. As a result, the RRI advocacy intervention had the effect of making community access to resources and markets greater than it would have otherwise been.	2011
SO5	Liberia Pitsawing Regulations and Related Capacity Building	In March, 2012, the Forest Development Authority (FDA) of Liberia issued a new regulation that legalizes community pitsawing for the first time, facilitated in part by RRI support to Liberian pitsawyer advocates and the pitsawyers' union (the Liberian Chainsaw & Timber Dealers Union, or LICSATDUN). This regulation has allowed the pitsawyers union to build its capacity to demonstrate credibility in its operations and markets, develop improved relationships between pitsawyers and forest managers and market players, and generally improved the business environment for pitsawyers.	2012

From the perspective of the IM Team, the table above contains a very good list of some of the most important **planned** accomplishments of RRI during FP 1.[14] If the Strategic Outcomes in the Revised Log-Frame genuinely represent progress toward RRI's Objectives, then the extent of achievement of these SOs reflects the extent of realization of the Objectives. While the SOs were not fully realized in the sense of reaching the planned level of achievement of each outcome, the data collected and presented over four years suggest that the Strategic Outcomes, and, hence, RRI's Objectives were realized to a significant extent. There is also reason to believe that RRI could have made a good case for additional Milestones related to almost every one of its Strategic Outcomes, so the apparent

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[14] The monitoring system has not proven as good at capturing the **unforeseen** accomplishments of RRI that may not be as directly relevant to one of the pre-identified Strategic Outcomes of the Initiative. The report returns to this point in the Conclusion, below.

failure to reach certain milestones could well be a question of data collection and reporting capacity, rather than real achievement of desired outcomes.

This finding assumes that the identified Strategic Outcomes actually represent progress toward the Development Objective and the Project Objective, as defined in the original Log-frame, i.e., that the SOs identified by RRG at the time of the revision of the Log-frame were the "right" outcomes. A final evaluation of the results of RRI's Framework Period I might usefully analyze the extent to which RRI chosen and achieved Strategic Outcomes actually advanced the Initiative's overall objectives and validated its essential value proposition.[15]

Interestingly, some readers of this report raised questions about the veracity of Milestones validated by the IM Team on 2010 and 2011, after not having raised those questions at the time of the original validation. This could simply be a matter of more attention given to the current report, but it also points to a real limitation of any monitoring methodology. Monitoring provides a kind of snapshot of the achievements of a process, a network or an organization over a fixed period of time. In the following year, monitoring will focus on the achievements of a new period, without paying as much attention to the achievements of the earlier period. One function of a well-integrated evaluation is to take a longer view of the real significance of organizational outcomes and outputs. Good evaluation determines, among other things, whether or not validated achievements stand "the test of time."

2. <u>Using the results of previous IM exercises, comment on the extent to which internal and independent monitoring systems provide information that made possible mid-course adjustments;</u>

Monitoring information did provide information that helped RRI make mid-course adjustments. Monitoring information gathered through RRI's independent and internal monitoring systems was not, however, the only or even the main resource relied upon by management for this purpose.

From the earliest considerations of creating integrated Independent and Internal Monitoring systems, the primary justifications for the necessary investments in such systems have been four:

- To collect information that would inform strategic evaluation to be carried out alongside the integrated monitoring effort;
- To promote institutional learning, over time and across programs and functional teams;
- To provide decision makers with the information necessary to mid-course adjustment of tactics and, in rare cases, strategy; and
- To facilitate the accurate and timely reporting of mission-driven results to funders and other stakeholders.

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[15] RRI Institutional Business Arrangements states that, "with a limited incremental investment in improved coherence and coordination, existing organizations can dramatically increase their contribution to the rights, dignity and development of forest dependent people globally as well as to forest conservation and more equitable economic and social development."

RRG is asking the IM Team to reflect on the Independent Monitoring experience of the past four years from the perspective of this third rationale for a systematic approach to monitoring.

One thing that is clear from the last four years of Independent Monitoring of RRI is that mid-course corrections are very much a part of the culture of the Coalition. The idea that strategy is a fixed road map toward the fulfillment of static goals is entirely foreign to the Initiative, at all levels. Especially at the level of Global Programs led by RRG staff and senior management, strategy is much more a filter for making adaptive decisions than a road map toward fixed outcomes.

The Log-frame establishes a type of strategic framework and annual plans attempt to identify lines of intervention likely to advance strategic intent. RRG takes these plans seriously, but senior management is quite ready to reallocate resources toward areas of perceived opportunity. In both 2009 and 2010, the Global Planning process set ambitious goals in the areas of Realizing Rights and ATEMs, but when senior management noticed an opening to inject rights considerations firmly into the discussion of REDD and REDD+, it made Rights and Climate change the overwhelming priority of Global Program work in those years, to the point that RRI analyzed the danger that it might become a "one-trick pony" focused exclusively on that theme.

The idea that RRI might play a role in the creation of a network of senior forestry officials of heavily forested countries was certainly on the screen of RRI during the Global Planning process at the end of 2009, but when it became evident that there was great interest in such a network, and a feeling that RRG should act as a kind for secretariat for that network, RRG changed course abruptly to direct more energy toward the conception of this network and consideration of the positioning possibilities that it offered to the Initiative.

The vast majority of the many mid-course corrections by RRG came about in this way. Senior management takes in information from its own sources and analyzes that information, often together, very much in real time. RRG leadership then seeks input and consultation with trusted advisors or confidants, and makes decisions about the re-allocation of effort and resources. This sort of dynamic management style has very little to do with monitoring information, laboriously and methodically gathered in the form of reports. In fact, senior management has remarked to the IM team on several occasions that they seldom, if ever, have a chance to read monitoring reports, other than the ones they work on, themselves.

RRG's own annual reports to the IM Team on the management response to the IM recommendations affirm that some mid-course corrections result from monitoring inputs. These occur by a process very different than the one described above. Based on monitoring data, the IM Team always makes 4-6 recommendations to RRG senior management as part of the annual IM report. Such recommendations—such as increasing communications or administrative capacity, ensuring continuity of attention to the roadmap to tenure reform in Indonesia, putting in place an internal monitoring system or altering the nature of Partner participation in RRI governance— serve to put an issue on the agenda of senior management for the coming year. In some cases, like the Indonesia case, the issue is already very much on that agenda and might well have been

addressed in the absence of any mention by the IM team. In other cases, the IM recommendation focuses attention on an issue that was not previously viewed as a priority. In fully half the cases, senior management looks at the issue and either determines that the recommended action is not possible—as in the case of opening the contracting system to multi-year contracting—or is not desirable, as occurred in the case of the recommendation regarding a stronger commitment to national facilitation. RRG's "response to recommendation" reports affirm that some IM recommendations do lead to actions that could be deemed "mid-course tactical corrections." Most often these are corrections in internal processes, rather than programmatic shifts.

Much of the monitoring information generated by RRI relates to decision making at the programmatic level, especially in Country and Regional Programs. When consulted for this and other reports, some staff suggest that the commitment to a serious assessment conversation—the core of the monitoring commitment at the Country and Regional level—has changed the nature of the country planning process in important ways. The reports coming out of those discussions (APMRs) don't lead to tactical corrections, but the assessment dialogue can lead to such changes. This was precisely the intent of the country-level monitoring activity.

It is a minority of the regional staff who have responded this way. More common is the observation that all of the monitoring work comes at a very difficult time of year, making it extremely burdensome for staff. Furthermore, according to this narrative, Partners and Collaborators tend to see the whole monitoring enterprise as simply a different kind of accountability exercise vis a vis the Secretariat. As such, they fail to see the benefit of it for their work.

All of these observations must be understood against the backdrop of the IM Team's perception that Country and Regional programs are, by their nature, less flexible and adaptive than RRI's Global Programs. The contracting process and the financial interest of participants both tend to generate a certain level of inertia in the process, and a continuity in proposed and approved activities that simply doesn't exist in the Global Programs.

Finally, the RRG staff (mostly Global Programs staff) responsible for gathering and presenting the information used to support claims that the organization has reached a Strategic Outcome Milestone definitely share the sense that monitoring activity occurs at the worst possible time of year. Some suggest that, absent the time pressure, the documentation of Milestones could be a useful exercise, but few suggest that it drives considerations of tactical corrections in their programs. The IM Team has been informed on a number of occasions that the realization that the Log-Frame projections required progress on a certain outcome did stimulate a more focused discussion on how to advance that work, but this probably does not rise to the level of a mid-course correction.

In summary, RRI is a network that gains much of its comparative advantage by being strategic in the sense of acting on a set of widely shared principles and highly intentional medium to long-term intent. It also derives great benefit from being able to execute effective mid-course tactical adjustments that are consistent with that strategy. By no means do all such corrections work out for

the Initiative, but enough do bear fruit to make this adaptive nature a notable aspect of RRI's organizational culture.

Monitoring information has come to play a role in how the Coalition makes these adjustments, but it is by no means the primary driver of the adaptive culture at RRI. In a context where capacity is so strained and so much is expected of everyone, all activities that demand serious attention and aren't seen to directly support the day-to-day efforts of staff will come under increasing scrutiny.

In response to that entirely predictable scrutiny, the IM Team would ask the following questions:

- Would monitoring information be seen as more valuable if monitoring were more more fully integrated with other strategic cycle interventions, such as planning and evaluation?
- Have all Staff, Partners and Collaborators responsible for RRI's gathering and presenting monitoring information been fully trained in RRI's monitoring approach and its relationship to other key mission functions?
- How might senior management integrate their own methods for accessing and analyzing information into RRI's monitoring approach in ways that increase organizational learning?

The answers to these and similar questions might help define the nature of RRI's commitment to Monitoring and Evaluation in FPII.

3. <u>Note some of the emerging strengths and weaknesses of RRI methods of monitoring and implementation.</u>

This is another item in the IM's Terms of Reference that might be more fully addressed in a Final Evaluation of the entire experience of FP I. As in the other parts of this section, we offer reflections here from the perspective of four years on Independent Monitoring exercises.

Monitoring Approach: Emerging Strengths and Weaknesses

The first point to make about RRI's monitoring approach is that its senior management has fully supported the design and implementation of an internal monitoring system, as well as the establishment of protocols for independent monitoring that interface quite smoothly with the internal system. It has also invested significant resources in the implementation of five comprehensive Independent Monitoring exercises, addressing (if not fully implementing) all of the formal recommendations of those exercises. RRI Partners and Collaborators have participated in over 200 interviews, focus groups and review meetings related to Independent Monitoring and have been uniformly open to sharing information and perspectives on the progress of the Initiative, as well as its persistent challenges. RRG staff have shouldered much of the burden of both the internal and independent monitoring systems. While staff have evidenced different degrees of "buy in" to a system that carries additional responsibilities for them, staff have performed monitoring tasks with a high degree of professionalism and commitment. In every aspect of this overall assessment, RRI is some distance ahead of the vast majority of organizations with whom it has been

the privilege of KMSC to collaborate. At least two of RRI's core funders have used the Initiative's monitoring approach as an example in internal discussions of assessment design and strategy. Any additional comments about the strengths and weaknesses of RRI's monitoring approach must rest on this conceptual foundation. The IM Team is not clear if, in the absence of the gentle insistence of its Donor Consortium, RRI would have opted to establish a monitoring approach with the rigor of the current system, but once they decided to do so, the RRG staff members responsible for this system have been admirably serious and consistent in its implementation. The reason for that consistency matters little.

Strengths

- Consistent management support for internal/independent approach and positive disposition among staff and stakeholders to share information with IM
- Consistently and almost completely implemented each year
- Comprehensive...addressing all program areas in some way
- Designed with sustainability of staff support in mind (whether or not this design concept has been successfully reflected in the practice is a matter of discussion)
- Systematic...based on a set of protocols implemented annually
- Outcome-based, rather than output or activity-based
- Relatively well-integrated with planning processes (integration creates some of the timing issues)
- Combines qualitative and quantitative measures of progress
- Participatory...built on inputs from a variety of stakeholders
- Reports support interaction with donors and other stakeholders and allies
- Validation based on multiple, internal and external sources of data and perspective
- Promotes systematic collection of data on network implementation experience

Weaknesses

- Management support, but no true "champion" among leadership
- No overall staff coordinator with strong commitment to making the system work and time to operationalize the commitment
- Poor timing of many monitoring functions...coinciding with time of high demands on staff (difficult to know when this would not be the case)
- Insufficient methodological integration between monitoring approach and evaluation practice (MTR)
- Inadequate training of monitoring participants leading to uneven knowledge across all stakeholders of intent of system and uses of information
- Methodologically constrained by Logical Framework approach that requires adaptation for advocacy-driven mission
- Need for improvement in selective program-level validation of staff-generated data
- Perception of low benefits for high cost in staff time and effort

- Referenced to Logical Framework that may not reflect network's true strategic priorities...LF developed as a technical output, but serving a strategic function
- Perceived duplication of scope of monitoring instruments
- Insufficient overlap of process or data with "informal monitoring" practice of senior management that drives most mid-course adjustments
- Close review of monitoring reports, but less engagement with results

There is much to improve in RRI's monitoring approach, but the more important point is that there exists a functioning system with five years of experience that can be improved. In those five years, both the IM Team and those engaged in internal monitoring have learned a great deal about the RRI network, its many achievements and the daunting obstacles that it faces. The Conclusion section below includes a more nuanced interpretation of the KMSC experience as Independent Monitor of RRI, but these observations provide points of departure for a thorough analysis of the monitoring experience.

Implementation Approach: Emerging Strengths and Weaknesses

While the IM exercise is not designed primarily as a review of implementation, four years of monitoring engagement has given the IM Team a broad view of the way RRI works. The following list of strengths and weaknesses of the Initiative's implementation approach is rooted in that monitoring perspective. As is often the case, some of RRI's most notable strengths are closely related—almost the other side of the coin—to some of its greatest challenges.

Emerging Strengths

- Powerful combination of active local platform and global analysis/advocacy voice
- Advocacy positioning sits on strong research/evidence foundation
- Strong technical and adaptive leadership at all levels
- Coalition brings together critical mass of key civil society actors on forest tenure issues
- National platforms often combine local and international actors
- Unique strategic analysis capacity present as core competency that created immediate credibility and notoriety within community forestry sector
- Ability to convene diverse actors (especially academics, government and CSOs) to various discussion platforms (dialogues, conferences, ongoing networks) became clear during FP I; emerging emphasis on expanding/reinventing private sector connections
- Steady, if uneven, growth in capacity to communicate RRI perspective and impact to key constituencies/audiences
- Global programs highly flexible and opportunistic; SRM offers a measure of agility to Country and Regional interventions
- Committed to understand and act upon unique challenges and opportunities faced by women and indigenous people seeking tenure reform/recognition
- Has been able to attract resources for global advocacy/analysis as well as local tenure-reform actions

- Strong thematic identity as a "player" in rights and climate change debate
- Through exchanges and other mechanisms, attention given to learning across national experiences
- Has resisted temptation to grow and bureaucratize Secretariat
- Consistent commitment to each element of the strategic cycle: planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Implementation Challenges

- Resources that make national level work possible also create internal "donor-grantee" dynamic that can complicate smooth functioning of coalition
- Operational/strategic synergy at national level difficult to achieve...always easier for individual organizations to implement on their own...productive coordination among Partners and Collaborators requires intentionality and facilitation
- Nature of partnerships that underlie country and regional programs make those programs less flexible and opportunistic, in general, than global programs
- Divergent views within RRG, among regions and between RRG and some Partner/Collaborators on proper relationship between RRI and private sector will challenge implementation of "New Directions"
- Lack of administrative/operational capacity in RRG, given administrative demands of "re-granting" role and commitments around monitoring and evaluation
- Donor requirements for use and reporting of funds enforce internal implementation cycle/calendar that is less than optimal
- Heavy dependence on small group of RRG senior managers
- Continuing challenges of making operational the Initiative's principled commitment to empowerment and mobilization of women in tenure reform efforts

X.   CONCLUSION

The conclusion to the Independent Monitor's Report generally focuses on summarizing the results of the annual monitoring exercise. Given the slightly different focus of the IM Terms of Reference in this final year of the first Framework Period, the focus is slightly different. This conclusion seeks to accomplish two things: (1) Signal what we consider to be a few "indicative moments" occurring during the first five years of RRI's history, and briefly suggest why we consider them to be occurrences that reflect something particularly noteworthy about the Initiative; and (2) Offer a concluding reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the RRI's monitoring effort during FP I.

In an experience as rich and diverse as that of RRI over the last period, it is always dangerous to highlight a few occurrences as indicative moments. We do so here, fully aware that we are choosing a few such moments among many that are considered noteworthy from the perspective of the Independent Monitor. Indicative moments are not highlights or signal achievements, but they are occurrences that indicate the consolidation of the character of a given process. As such, they say something important about that process. These moments are placed roughly in chronological order.

1. **Agreement on Institution Business Arrangements for RRI and a Memorandum of Understanding among RRI Partners and RRG:** Few coalitions or working partnerships of global civil society (none, in our experience) take the time to agree on the way the entity is going to operate and make decisions in the way RRI did during its founding period. These documents have proven imperfect and in need of review and adjustment, but that they exist, are taken seriously and can be changed sets RRI apart and provides part of the explanation for the Initiative's successes during the intervening period;

2. **The publication of the RRI report, "Seeing People through the Trees":** In 2009, when KMSC participated in RRI's IM exercise for the first time, an eye-opening number of the external sources (and some internal sources) mentioned this report as something that "put RRI on the map" for them. The report formalized important elements of the then quite unique perspective on forest tenure reform that would come to characterize RRI, and established RRI as an important "new" source of original strategic analysis of the forestry sector. It also signaled the Initiative's intent to "scale up" tenure reform through a combination of global advocacy presence and national policy change efforts.

3. **The publication of the first RRI Independent Monitoring Report:** RRI's commitment to submit itself to the cost and inconvenience of "independent monitoring" might well have been a rhetorical flourish to calm jittery donors making a significant commitment to a relative unknown. The publication of the first report established that, even in the frenzy of getting RRI off the ground, the RRG leadership was committed to independent monitoring (and, much more importantly, organizational learning) as a foundational element of the Initiative's practice.

4. **The successful organization of the Yaoundé Conference:** The regional conference in Cameroon established not only that the country networks at the base of RRI were real, but that those networks, in regional coordination with RRG had significant convening power at the regional level. Most importantly, once the perspective on tenure reform at the core of RRI achieved such a regional projection, it could bring public decision makers to the table in ways that held out the possibility of very concrete impacts on tenure policy at the national level. This event also put on display for RRI the tremendous logistical demands of taking advantage of the Initiative's unique positioning and potential.

5. **The incorporation of RRI Partners into Global Program planning:** RRI's foundational agreements establish that the strategic drivers of RRI's Country and Regional programs would be RRI Partners and Collaborators, with RRG playing an important role via participation in C & R planning processes. Those agreements also make RRG the driving force behind Global Programs, but the active participation of Partners and Collaborators in the planning and implementation of Global Programs was not as clearly established. The inclusion of Partners in the 2009 Global Planning meeting did not immediately achieve the full engagement of those Partners in RRI Global Programs, but it signaled RRG's intent to achieve this integration. The impact of this change has become evident in the gradual change in the nature of Global Programs, and the quality of Partner participation in those programs, since that time. Obviously, this is a road along which there are still many miles to go.

6. **The formation of Megaflorestais, with RRI playing a key facilitating role:** The importance of productive engagement with key governmental actors in heavily-forested countries was a foundational principle of RRI. The Coalition's role in the establishment of an ongoing network of senior forestry officials of most of the world's heavily-forested countries was something of a surprise even to those who made it happen. Never was a key strategic outcome less planned or expected. This particular result indicated that RRI's convening power, when properly framed, most definitely extended to the public sector. It also exposed/put on display the "opportunistic" nature of RRI in the sense that it was able to grasp an unforeseen opportunity when it appeared, and then act to turn that opportunity to the advantage of the RRI agenda. Since RRG's actions in relation to the formation of Megaflorestais might not have been seen as a priority by the entire coalition, this case also exemplifies RRG's sometimes controversial—but from the perspective of the IM team, important—ability to act with relative autonomy from the entire coalition, and then work to demonstrate the benefits and appropriateness of its steps, in practice.

7. **The facilitation of closer ties and working coordination between lowland (Petén) and highland forest communities in Guatemala:** The RRI country platform in Guatemala made an important contribution to this important advance of the movement for tenure reform in Guatemala. Closer coordination between national organizations such as Ut'z Che' and ACOFOP did not result in immediate recognition of community tenure rights in Guatemala, but it has shifted the terms of the national discussion there. This was one of the first cases examined closely by the IM Team that affirmed RRI's ability to really add value at the country level.

8. **The withdrawal of CIFOR and IUCN from RRI:** Most global initiatives measure success by their ability to attract new members to their coalition. This ability to incorporate new Partners and Collaborators is certainly an indicator of the success of RRI, but so is its ability to survive the decision by two founding global Partners that Partner status in RRI no longer served their organizational interest. The departure of CIFOR and IUCN certainly had an impact on RRI's implementation capabilities at both the local and global levels, and reflected the enduring tensions within the Coalition over the proper division of power and responsibilities between the Partners and RRG. The fact that the Coalition managed that challenging transition without losing direction or support established its resilience and seemed to surprise more than a few observers.

9. **The Stora Enso Affair:** The case of RRI's press work and advocacy actions in relation to supply chain issues faced by the Finnish forestry giant, Stora Enso, in China demonstrated that RRI's engagement at the country level was putting it in a position to gather important information concerning private sector operations in China, and to act on this information in a timely and effective way. RRG's work to bring this information to the attention of the international press showed both the credibility that the Initiative had established and its ability to do effective communications work. Finally, RRG's ability to engage in direct negotiations with Stora Enso officials and achieve some of its desired results in those interactions spoke to the extent to which RRI had become an advocacy "player" at the global level.

10. **Opening the "roadmap" to tenure reform in Indonesia:** RRI's contribution to active negotiation of tenure reform proposals by the government of Indonesia and Indonesian NGOs indicated several things about the maturity of the Initiative. A long and complex process preceded this outcome, but the public breakthrough in this process took place at a national conference in Lombok, Indonesia co-sponsored by RRI, the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry and the International Timber Trade Organization. The existence of such an event would have been unlikely, even three years before, and RRI's own credibility across multiple forest sector actors was a key factor in the successful organization of the event. A representative of Indonesia's President with strong ties to sectors of Indonesian civil society, opened the event with a spirited call for recognition of the customary tenure rights of the country's indigenous and other forest communities. Then, in front of a variety of civil society actors, the MoF official present echoed this call and committed his Ministry to establish and to negotiate a roadmap for the formal recognition of those rights. Some civil society actors remain skeptical about this roadmap, and there is no question that the road to tenure reform in Indonesia will be a long one. But the fact that it is even being discussed in a serious way indicates RRI's ability (that is, RRI as a national/international civil society platform and a global secretariat) to influence the path of tenure reform in a key forested country.

11. **The Bangkok "New Directions" meeting of RRI:** The Bangkok meeting marked the conclusion of the strategy review process in which RRI sought a wide variety of external views on the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy that guided it through the first Framework Proposal period. The results of the meeting reflected the network's ability to (1) conduct an in-depth strategic self reflection; (2) reach conclusions, at the leadership level of RRG, concerning necessary strategic adjustments; and (3) present those proposed adjustments to RRI Partners and achieve general agreement to press forward with exploring the possible implementation of those adjustments. Several Partners—notably all Latin American Partners—were not present at the Bangkok meeting, and none of the RRI Collaborators were there to discuss the "New Directions," but the meeting nonetheless affirmed that ability of the Initiative to consider and discuss important changes in its overall strategy.

12. **RRI positioning around the Rio + 20 events:** RRI released an important new study at Rio + 20 ("What Rights?") and located important spaces to publicize the Coalition's work as well as that of its Partners and Collaborators. These capacities and characteristics of the network had long since been established in relation to previous global gatherings. The Rio + 20 interventions of RRI, however, were most noteworthy for what they showed about the maturation of its communications work, and the concrete results of the Initiative's increased investments in that work. RRG mounted a full-scale communications effort around the conference and achieved extremely important earned media placements in concert with Partners, Collaborators and, in at least one important case, a member of the Donor Consortium. The Communications Team also used the event as an important capacity-building opportunity for select Partners and Collaborators. The results of RRI's work around Rio + 20 complement the findings of the 2012 Communications Audit in

establishing the impressive expansion of RRI's communications footprint, especially over the past 2-3 years.

13. **The participation of RRI Collaborators in important strategy and Global Programs Planning deliberations.** For the first time, at least 15 RRI Collaborators from Africa, Asia and Latin America participated in the planning and strategy meetings that took place in Washington in November 2012. This participation was costly for RRI and created a host of logistical and facilitation challenges, but it was a very important step for the network. It marks the Initiative's recognition that Collaborators have become important drivers of much of RRI's country level work and that the planning of regional strategies, Global Programs and the overall strategic direction of the Initiative must somehow take this important change into account.

As suggested above, these thirteen "indicative moments" are signal events that establish an important characteristic of RRI or point to the emergence of an important trend over the course of the first Framework Period. Some of them were very much planned, in the sense of identified as a Milestone in the achievement of one of RRI's Strategic Outcome, but many of them were unplanned. Attempting to point out such moments in a history as complex as that of RRI is, itself, an important exercise. Presumably, telling the story of how each of these moments came about would provide an important perspective on both FP I and the challenges and opportunities likely to present themselves in FP II. This provides, perhaps, a useful segue way into a final discussion of RRI's monitoring approach over the first five years of its existence.

The IM Team has emphasized throughout this report, and in all of the previous IM reports, that RRI has made a commendable and quite unusual commitment to monitoring its work. That is, gathering information about RRI's progress as that progress takes place, and then organizing and presenting that information in a form that would allow it to inform decisions about deployment of human resources and the allocation of financial and other material resources. It has also invested considerable resources in an independent monitoring process to help RRI design its internal monitoring system, and to provide selective validation and analysis of the information collected by that system.

The Initiative's internal monitoring system was designed to interface smoothly with the function of the Independent Monitor and these two processes have been reasonably well-integrated. In general, the Independent Monitor has:

1. Confirmed that the key elements of the internal monitoring system are being implemented, as designed by RRI;
2. Selectively validated the data gathered by RRI;
3. Commented on the extent to which the data affirm that RRI is on track to achieve its Strategic Outcomes; and
4. Made recommendations for tactical adjustments that will accelerate the achievement of those Strategic Outcomes.

Neither the internal monitoring system nor the independent monitoring exercises can easily assess the appropriateness of RRI's strategy (has the organization chosen Strategic Outcomes that will effectively advance its overall objective?) or the validity of its theory of change. These considerations often form part of the agenda of the evaluation component of the strategic cycle.

RRG organized two evaluative exercises during FP 1: the Mid-Term Evaluation, completed in mid 2011 and the program-level evaluation of the Communications program. These were well-managed and highly professional exercises that provided important inputs to both RRG and the broader Initiative. The integration of these exercises with either the internal or independent monitoring work supported by RRI was not clear to the IM Team. It is entirely appropriate that someone other than the IM Team conduct RRI evaluation exercises, but the methodological integration of those exercises with ongoing monitoring work is critically important if an integrated strategic cycle is to be achieved.

Effective monitoring exercises are carried out by staff and other stakeholders with general understanding of monitoring methodology and clarity concerning their own organization's monitoring objectives and approach. Perhaps most importantly, they are clear about how their own contribution to the monitoring effort fits into and furthers those larger objectives.

The IM and RRG senior management organized workshops designed to prepare staff for the "rollout" of the internal monitoring system in 2010. These workshops, which were uneven in quality and content, relied on the participating staff to then transmit the information and orientation shared at the workshops to other RRG staff and the country and regional planning teams. The first generation of monitoring reports suggests that this transfer occurred more smoothly in some areas than in others. Systematic follow-up to those workshops was discussed, but never fully implemented due to resource and time constraints. Staff turnover has placed a number of new staff members in key positions related to internal monitoring. These staff members have received orientation to their monitoring responsibilities and, in many cases produced excellent monitoring data, but the IM team is not aware of systematic orientation of key staff in succeeding years.

Another important characteristic of successful monitoring approaches is that they are sustainable, given the resources of the organization in question. The "leanness" of RRG has been a consistent theme through each of the IM exercises. This is seen as positive in that the Initiative has avoided creating a bloated Secretariat with a large staff creating and managing a range of bureaucratic processes implying high transaction costs and eventually becoming an impediment to effective implementation. At the same time, this leanness has meant that, as the operations of the Initiative have become more complex, a lean Secretariat has faced capacity shortages in key areas, such as Contract Administration. Managing the fine line between "leanness" and debilitating lack of administrative/management capacity has become an important part of the art of leading the Initiative.

Fulfilling RRI's monitoring commitments places demands on a variety of stakeholders, especially RRG staff. Many of these demands coincide precisely, in time, with the period of most intense engagement of RRG staff in the network's annual planning calendar. When this workplan overload takes place in the context of even one or two unfilled key positions within the Secretariat (as it did during the current IM exercise), it can result in a situation that appears barely sustainable. This will necessarily affect the quality and the timeliness of the monitoring data produced and, therefore, the ability of the monitoring exercise to fulfill its objectives. It will also, over time, impact the morale of staff and their attitude toward the entire monitoring enterprise. Capacity to manage the internal/independent monitoring work in the context of multiple competing demands on senior management is another, closely related issue.

Finally, in particular for a network with objectives like those of RRI, a strong monitoring system must be able to capture both progress on planned outcomes and important achievements that were not anticipated at the beginning of the planning cycle. For a structure designed to be agile and opportunistic, these unplanned achievements (and the closely related "missed opportunities") can be among the most important data for monitoring efforts to capture. The current monitoring system was designed to be able to capture such unplanned achievements and missed opportunities, but, in a context of scarce resources, the sense of urgency to "demonstrate that we are doing what we said we'd do" has conditioned the practice of monitoring. What was planned is and will remain critically important, but an exclusive focus in this direction can fail to demonstrate some of what is really unique and powerful about RRI.

Because of the nature of its mission, RRI is committed to delivering "tipping point" contributions to complex social and political change processes, rather than more easily measured baskets of goods, training outputs or social services. The changes sought by RRI often involve repositioning of key global actors, such as the FAO, Dfid, the REDD Policy Board, Stora Enso or the ITTO on forest tenure or supply chain issues. Those changes just as often require strategic interventions at the regional or global level designed to reinforce demands for changes in the positioning of national actors such as the Indonesian government on the question of indigenous community forest rights or the government of Bolivia as it debates its National Forest Law. RRI must "think and act globally to achieve change nationally" just as often as it does the reverse.

RRI , therefore, seeks complex changes that are extremely difficult to measure, and it does it at a time when those who provide resources for the work are under extreme pressure to show that their investments are providing tangible "value" for the investor. The difficulty of measuring what RRI achieves is not a rationale for failing to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches to assessing its success. That donors have found resources in increasingly pressurized allocation processes to continue to support RRI—and to increase that support, in some cases—suggests that RRI has found ways to demonstrate that it is, indeed, delivering value for the resources invested in it. The Initiative's successful implementation of internal/independent monitoring exercises has certainly contributed to that effort to successfully tell the RRI story.

With that contribution clearly in mind, the IM team offers the following conclusions concerning RRI's monitoring effort during FP I:

1. RRI's internal and independent monitoring efforts are yielding important information about the Initiative's progress against its strategic intent, and RRI stakeholders, including donors, generally understand and appreciate these results.
2. Monitoring information is being used, to varying degrees, by decision-makers at multiple levels, but always in combination with other sources of information and analysis.
3. While there is close integration between RRI's monitoring work and its complex internal planning process, neither of those "strategic cycle" elements are as well integrated with the evaluation element of the cycle as they might be.
4. The design concept behind RRI's monitoring approach and the connection of each element of that approach to the Initiative's overall mission could be better understood, in some cases, by those being asked to provide critical monitoring inputs.
5. In the context of limited administrative and programmatic capacity at the level of the Secretariat, the timing and the scope of the current monitoring commitment can challenge the sustainability of RRI's monitoring commitments (especially from the perspective of RRG staff).
6. The emphasis of the current monitoring process on tracking progress toward planned outcomes is essential to the success of the monitoring approach, but the ability to capture more fully both unplanned achievements and missed opportunities would add value to the process.
7. The character of the Independent Monitoring role has been generally appropriate for the first Framework period, but the maturation of the entire Initiative and the important new strategic directions it contemplates require a reconsideration of the nature of this role for FP II.

One first-time participant in the RRI governance meetings in January raised a fundamental question about the independent monitoring enterprise to which the IM Team has been dedicated for the past four years. In essence, he asked what it means to monitor progress when RRI has never developed a strategy in the traditional sense of that word. Colleagues pointed the questioner to a variety of documents, (the Institutional Business Arrangements, the Memorandum of Understanding, the Framework Proposal and, of course, the Logical Framework). They had several more to offer, but the new participant was not convinced. He wanted to see a strategy that clarified the problem RRI intended to address, it's notion of how the problem will be resolved, what RRI will contribute to the resolution, what sort of resources it would need to make that contribution, etc.

Like the persistent questioner, the IM Team searched for "a strategy" upon engaging with RRI, but found none. The team reviewed all of the documents referenced above and it found an Initiative guided by the networked pursuit of a number of strategies, rather than a single grand plan. The insistence on the emergence of a single grand plan to be crystallized in an elegant strategy document would have almost certainly scuttled the Initiative before it took flight. Those providing leadership to RRI and many of those providing resources for it realized this, to their great credit.

The cohabitation of different strategies in the "mix" that is RRI is both a great strength of the network and one of its most vexing challenges. This diversity (chaos, actually) can also make the waters extremely muddy at times, but no one will perish from tedium. The Initiative will last as long as the various strategies in play find enough common ground to provide a firm foundation. The coordinated pursuit of multiple strategies creates the dynamism that characterizes RRI, but the coordination of such an entity is an enormous challenge. Traditional management approaches fall short of what is required and the inflexible insistence on the promulgation or the implementation of any single strategy erodes the ground from the feet of the Initiative. To date, the common ground under the Initiative has been sufficient to provide a strong, if shifting, foundation. If this foundation is to endure, those with the power and foresight to drive strategy across the network must do so with care, humility, cunning (yes, cunning) and no small amount of the metaphysical. They must be devoted keepers of the common ground as much as inspired architects of their own edifices.

If traditional management approaches fall short then so, too, do traditional approaches to monitoring and evaluation. Independent monitoring of RRI required an essential reference, a compass to point the way to true progress. The IM Team found that reference in, of all places, a Log-Frame created by a small subset of the actors in RRI and then revised by an even smaller group. From the beginning, the shortcomings of this instrument for determining true north in RRI were evident, but the alternative was not clear. At first, the IM Team threw down the compass as useless, but soon found that did no better at finding its way without it. Like Churchill's democracy, the Log-Frame was a terribly limited basis for monitoring, but was much better than any other one available at the time.

Having found its reference, however inadequate, the process developed a certain internal logic, leading to instruments for the collection and internal monitoring of much data—by people who had much else to attend to—and the review of claims that progress was, indeed, being made (again, progress according to the Log-Frame definition). All of this was germane and fruitful to the extent that the assumptions that guided the monitoring—those contained in the Log-Frame—represented a true reflection of the real intent of the Initiative. Sometimes, yes, sometimes, decidedly less so…

As the page turns on Framework Proposal Period I, it is time to revisit those guiding assumptions and RRI has, indeed, reconstructed a Logical Framework for FP II. Like the first Log-Frame, this one was constructed very much outside of the network process of RRI and will, therefore, represent, at best, a technically compelling framework for one of the many strategies at work in RRI (the one that guides RRG). Independent Monitoring in FP II may well develop a stronger internal logic than in FP I, and better training of all system users may result in more capacity to assess progress and a better understanding of the reasons for their data-gathering activities. In that case, the monitoring (internal and independent) will better fulfill the purposes for which it occurs. But any notion that monitoring will occur on the basis of the network-wide strategy desired by the questioner at the January meetings is a flight of fancy, which is not to say that it's bad.

XI. RECOMMENDATIONS

As has been the case in previous IM reports, the report concludes with a small number of recommended interventions by key RRI stakeholders. These recommendations are generally directed toward interventions by RRG senior management, but also include calls for actions by the RRG Board. Those to whom the recommendations are directed review the recommendations and act on them or not, in accordance with their view of the efficacy of such actions. The response to these recommendations is formalized in a subsequent report on follow-up actions taken in response to the IM report.

1. Collaborator participation in regional and global program planning

Partners, Collaborators, RRG and the RRG Board should all be playing planning roles that are appropriate to their role within the Initiative. One of the real strengths of the 2012 planning process was that it recognized the emerging role of Collaborators as drivers of the Initiative's interventions at the country level. Collaborators appreciated this opportunity to participate in discussions at this level, but some observers felt that the planning process—especially regional planning—due to the new arrangements. RRG should conduct a serious review of the innovations contained in the 2012 planning process, facilitate open discussion of the results of the review among all stakeholders and organize 2013 planning in a way that is sustainable from a resource utilization perspective, achieves all planning goals and recognizes the shifting role of RRI Collaborators.

2. Long-term leadership development/transition planning

In close collaboration with senior management, the RRG Board should initiate a process of transition planning that recognizes both the vulnerability created by the high level of dependence of the Initiative on a small number of unique leaders, and the long-term, planned nature of successful leadership development and leadership transitions.

3. New Directions exploration

The "New Directions" identified by RRI during 2012 represent a potentially transformative strategic change agenda for the Initiative. Management of the exploration of these possible changes must be the first priority of senior management, and clear processes and timelines must be established for the exploration of the new directions. Internal communications regarding the New Directions will be instrumental to their success. All key network constituencies must be clear of the status of each proposal at all stages in the change process.

4. Comprehensive review of internal coalition relations and functioning

The environment in which RRI operates has changed dramatically during FPP I, as has the availability of resources to the Initiative. As it worked to maximize its impact in this dynamic

environment, RRI has made both technical and adaptive changes to internal processes in hopes of increasing its effectiveness. The cumulative effect of these adjustments has been gradual shifts in key relationships within the Initiative and the division of labor and responsibility among the Initiative's constituent parts. After five years of mindful tinkering in a dynamic environment, it is appropriate to take stock of emerging structural relationships among key coalition players, to identify the desired roles of key coalition stakeholders and the optimal relationships among those stakeholders and to assess the extent to which current internal processes are supporting the emergence of that "right relationship" among the key components of the coalition.

5. **DRC program development**

Given the size of the DRC, the immensity of its forest cover and the country's strategic importance to forest tenure reform on the African continent, the development of RRI programs there must be undertaken with even more than the usual level of attention. At the 2012 Africa regional planning meeting, the regional planning team expressed a keen interest in close involvement with this process and future program development must take this desire into full account. The rapid achievement of full staffing in the Africa section of RRG is an extremely important pre-condition to success in this critical program development effort.

6. **Strategic cycle integration**

Whatever sort of "streamlined" monitoring effort is carried out by RRI during FP II should be more closely integrated with any evaluation exercises undertaken during the same period. This need not require the participation of the IM Team in evaluation activity (or vice-versa). The 2011 Mid-Term Review played the role of a final evaluation carried out (very astutely) in time to inform the Blue Sky strategy review process. This timing is entirely appropriate and much more useful than a final review taking place after the end of the period. But RRG should schedule an actual FP II Mid-Term Review to replace the Independent Monitoring exercise at the end of year two of FP II (2014). This should focus on review of the strategic changes implied by the New Directions. The commitment to a Mid-Term Review and an IM exercise in the same year during FP I was admirable, but was not an optimal use of resources (especially given the lack of integration between the two) and contributed greatly to "assessment fatigue" on the part of the staff. A second evaluative exercise, timed very much like the Mid-Term Review carried out during FP1 (at the end of year four) is also highly advisable. Again, such an exercise could and should substitute for an Independent Monitoring exercise in that year. Finally, occasional, highly-focused, program-level reviews such as the Communications Audit can make important contributions to RRI's overall learning effort.

7. **Monitoring and Evaluation Training**

Expected adjustments to monitoring and evaluation protocols should be accompanied by a comprehensive effort to provide training to staff, management and key Partners and Collaborators on the content and objectives of the new protocols, as well as the importance of all monitoring inputs to RRI's overall learning strategy. In addition to strengthening the learning character of RRI,

auch a training commitment will yield excellent inputs for further refinement of the Initiative's monitoring approach. These inputs must be captured, analyzed and, as appropriate, implemented.

Appendix One—Individuals Interviewed for 2012 Rights and Resources Initiative Independent Monitoring Report

Name	Institution
Jean Aden	RRG Board of Directors
James Bampton	*RECOFTC
Barth Boika	RRN (DRC)
Francis Colee	Green Advocates (Liberia)
Sally Collins	RRI
Marcedonio Cortave	ACOFOP (Guatemala)
Ganga Ram Dahal	Rights and Resources Group
Penny Davies	Ford Foundation
Paul de Wit	Independent Consultant
Scott Dupree	Samdhana Institute
Bob Harrington	Montana Department of Nat. Res. and Conservation
Jeffrey Hatcher	Rights and Resources Group
John Hudson	RRG Board of Directors
Ivor Jorgensen	Norad
David Kaimowitz	Ford Foundation
Susan Kandel	PRISMA
Arvind Khare	Rights and Resources Group
Carlysle Levine	Independent Consultant
Victor López	Ut'z Che' (Guatemala)
Augusta Molnar	Rights and Resources Group
John Nelson	*Forest People's Program
Margaret Nilsson	SIDA
James Otto	SDI (Liberia)
Bharat Pathak	FECOFUN
Bharat Pojharel	Helvetas Swiss InterCooperation
Peter Riggs	Independent Consultant
Hanna Saarinen	*Land Issues Working Group (Lao/PDR)
Daniel Selener	Independent Consultant
Richard Smith	IBC (Peru)
Leonardo Tamburini	CEJIS (Bolivia)
Julie Weah	Foundation for Community Initiatives (Liberia)
Andy White	Rights and Resources Group

*Information delivered to Independent Monitor via e-mail.

APPENDIX TWO

Independent Monitoring and Evaluation
Rights and Resources Initiative
2012

Terms of Reference: Kevin Murray Strategic Consulting

Introduction: RRI's Monitoring and Evaluation Approach
The Rights and Resources Initiative has a core set of funding in place for strategic interventions from 2008-2012 (Framework Proposal I, or FPI) from a group of international donors that has enabled it to carry out its five year program. One of the agreements of FPI is that there be one, integrated system of monitoring, evaluation (M&E) for all donors and for all Partners, for the combined set of programmed activities identified strategically as contributing to achieve a set of desired outcomes that influence RRI's two overarching goals.[16]

RRI has designed and implemented an internal approach to monitoring and evaluation that is integrated into its strategic analysis and planning process and commits its secretariat (RRG) to compile the information necessary to support the ongoing assessment of progress toward the coalition's desired outcomes at all levels. Given the intense demands on its relatively small staff, RRI has carefully chosen internal monitoring methods that balance its commitment to evidence-based assessment with staff capacity. RRI's internal monitoring and evaluation practice also supports the activities of the coalition's Independent Monitor, who is engaged by RRG in order to:

- Provide an external assessment of progress on the coalition's highest level strategic outcomes;
- Identify obstacles to RRI's overall progress and offer RRG's senior management recommendations on actions to overcome those obstacles;
- Selectively validate the RRI's own program-level self-assessments; and
- Prepare an Independent Monitoring Report for RRG, the coalition partners and the RRG Board of Directors.

Verifying Progress on Strategic Indicators: RRI has specified a number of indicators, the monitoring and verification of which all is to confirm that it is making progress on the Strategic Outcomes related to its five-year Framework Proposal. With the help of coalition Partners and Collaborators, RRG staff gathers the information necessary to determine the coalition's progress on each Strategic Outcome based on a pre-established set of Strategic Outcomes at the national, regional and global levels.

Annual Strategic Priorities: As part of its annual planning process, RRG leadership develops a set of Annual Strategic Priorities that reflect emerging opportunities at the program and thematic level as well as management's sense of what will move the organization toward its identified strategic outcomes.

Monitoring Progress on Contracted Activities: Through its internal contracting system, RRG often transfers coalition resources to external actors (primarily Partners and Collaborators in the case of Country and Regional Programs) to enable those actors to carry out actions deemed strategic to the

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[16] The goals of RRI are: 1) to dramatically reduce poverty in the forested areas of the world; and 2) to substantially increase the forest area under local ownership and administration, with secure rights to use and trade products and services.

accomplishment of the coalition's programmatic goals. As part of its due diligence commitment, RRG has established a system to track the completion of these activities.

Monitoring Progress on Annual Outcomes at the Program Level: RRI carries out an elaborate annual participatory planning process that sets annual outcomes, for each country, regional, and global thematic program. The monitoring aspect of this process has been strengthened by building in a more formal step at which the planning team reviews progress on the outcomes it set for the previous year. For each outcome established the previous year, and for the five-year Strategic Outcomes, each planning team discusses the following:

1. A provisional assessment of progress made on the indicator;
2. Any evidence available to support this assessment; and
3. An explanation for the degree of progress achieved.

Based on the input collected from coalition actors during the planning process, each team creates the Annual Program Monitoring Report (APMR). This becomes a critical output of the planning process and an indispensable source of information for the Independent Monitor. Part of the role of the Independent Monitor is then to validate selectively (for identified country, regional and global programs) the findings of the APMR.

Taken together, the following practices amount to a monitoring approach that allows RRI to achieve a better sense of its progress over its complex range of programs:

- The monitoring of progress on global indicators (SO Milestones) based on data gathered by RRG staff
- The incorporation of a more formal monitoring component into the setting of and review of progress on Annual Strategic Priorities
- The due diligence tracking of program implementation
- The monitoring of progress on annual outcomes at the program level; and
- Carefully prioritized monitoring work by an Independent Monitor

Summary of Independent Monitoring work to date:
2009: The Independent Monitor conducted a review of internal and external secondary documentation, in-depth interviews of key actors and external experts, actively observed select Coalition events during site visits, and interviewed program staff in order to develop a set of working findings and a report presented to RRI leadership in 2010, assessing the impact of the Coalition to date and recommending strategic adjustments in RRI's M&E systems.

2010: The Independent Monitor worked with RRG to finish the design and implementation of the M&E system, which entailed supporting RRI in crafting and adjusting overarching goals and indicators that link the program of work to overall targets and establish five year benchmarks for success within FPI (and substituting them in RRI's logical framework) as well as the procedures for the gathering of information to support indicators; completed the design and establishment of internal M&E systems for annual Strategic Outcomes at the country, regional and global program level for activities implemented by RRG, Partners and Collaborators; and conducted independent monitoring of RRI's work in 2010, reporting on progress in each area.

2011: RRI contracted an independent team of experts to conduct a Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) of the implementation of FPI. The Independent Monitoring exercise complemented the MTE,

assessing how well the M&E system contributed to the organization's strategic analysis and planning process for which it was designed. The Independent Monitor worked to validate the Strategic Objective (SO) milestones set for that year and provided input on how to improve reporting, assessed the status of implementation of the Independent Monitoring system, and assessed the effectiveness of structural changes to integrate thematic elements into RRI's Global Programs work.

To date, 28 out of 42 potential total milestones categorized within the Strategic Objective framework, have been completed. Four additional milestones have been selected for 2012. (It has been decided by RRG Board to forgo completion of the ten remaining milestones for SO1, for which 10 milestones have already been verified. For a progress report of milestones completed to date, see *RRI Logframe 2008-12: Milestones Scorecard*, below.)

Proposal of Work for 2012:
There will be two major tasks undertaken by the Independent Monitor in 2012:
1. Independent Monitoring assessment of activities for 2012, and
2. Review four years of RRI monitoring and evaluation, in order to provide a cumulative and comprehensive assessment of the Coalition's progress during the 2008-12 Framework, in terms of achieving the five Strategic Objectives.

Specific activities for 2012 will include:

1. Independent Monitoring assessment:
   The consultant will be an independent monitor of the RRI and carry out the yearly independent evaluation of RRI programs in this capacity. Specifically, the consultant will:

   a. Validate the five Strategic Objective milestones selected for 2012. Potential milestones for 2012 include the following, although these are subject to change:

      i.   SO2: Rethinking forest regulations workshop (Montana)

      ii. SO3: UN-FAO: influence of RRI Tenure Tracking

      iii. SO4: Working group for tenure reform in Indonesia [or] tenure reform learning group in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

      iv. SO5: Guatemala: realizing benefits to forest resources through community enterprises, and

      v.   SO5: Liberia: breakthrough in business environment for pit-sawyers

   b. Validate the internal monitoring of annual and five-year Strategic Outcomes through country visits in coordination with RRG, participation in events and interviews with key actors as agreed with RRG

   c. Monitor RRI's response to the Independent Monitor's past recommendations

   d. Use information gathered by RRI, including APMRs and Strategic Outcome milestone reports to monitor and report on the Coalition's progress towards the strategic priorities for 2012

e. Identify internal and external obstacles to progress and make recommendations to address those obstacles

f. Draft, consult and present the annual Independent Monitoring report that will:

   i.   Inform the Coalition on the progress of program implementation

   ii. Selectively validate the information generated from internal monitoring reports

   iii. Collect feedback from relevant actors and constituencies

   iv. Assess how well RRI provides value addition to ongoing Coalition and Partner initiatives, and to the actions of other development actors in related political spheres

   v.   Evaluate that the Initiative is strategic and synergistic

2. Cumulative and comprehensive assessment of FP1:

The consultant will review four years of independent monitoring, and evaluate on the basis of reporting on 33 milestones, interviews and APMRs, and provide an assessment of:

a. To what extent did RRI achieve its Project Objectives of FPI?

b. Did the M&E systems provide sufficient information and leverage to make midcourse corrections, and if so, to what extent?

c. What are the emerging strengths and weaknesses of RRI Coalition methods of implementation and monitoring?

Annex: RRI Log-frame 2008-12: Milestones Scorecard

Strategic Outcomes	Objectively measurable and verifiable indicators	*Milestones 2008-2011*	*Milestones remaining for 2012*
1. Complementary global, national, regional and local organizations effectively synergize to achieve significant breakthroughs in tenure reform processes.	Facilitate at least **twenty** new, value-added joint actions and activities between partners and collaborators w/ a demonstrable effect on the other strategic outcomes.	10 • *Tenure Champion Platforms in Mali* • *Tenure Champion Platforms in Burkina Faso* • *Establishing Common Position and Reform Platform in Cameroon* • *Yaoundé Conference: Creating a Strategic Platform for Central and West Africa* • *Nepal NRM Confederation: Bringing Advocacy Groups Together* • *Guatemala Networking* • *Bolivia Country Planning Team* • *Climate Change Global & Regional Dialogues: Establishing the Centrality of Tenure Reforms* • *Africa Community Rights Network (ACRN)* • *Indonesia CSO Roadmap Coalition for Tenure Reform*	0 (cancelled)
2. A select set of strategic networks are better-informed, more active	At least **six** existing or new networks increase their	5 • *MegaFlorestais: Engaging Forest Agencies for Tenure and Policy Reforms*	1

	and effective in promoting reform nationally, regionally and/or globally.	capacity to influence policy related to forest tenure at all levels.	• *Global Alliance of Community Forestry: Strengthening Rights-holders Platform* • *CSAG-ITTO Network: Civil Society Brings Progressive Reform* • *REFACOF: African Women Establish a Powerful Platform* • *Next Generation Forest Agency Leadership*	
3.	Key strategic actors at the global level are committed and engaged in promoting major reforms in existing tenure, regulatory and governance arrangements. (Previous #1)	At least **five** inter-governmental and multilateral institutions (multilateral banks, ITTO, and other UN institutions) alter their position on forest tenure and actively support tenure and related reforms in their narrative and portfolios.	4 • *ITTO (CSAG): Community Forests and Enterprises Recognized* • *UNREDD: Civil Society and Oversight* • *UNFF Adopts Tenure and Community Forestry in Voluntary Agreements* • *Bilateral Aid Development*	1
4.	Changes in tenure legislation and regulatory or policy framework in favor of local communities in a subset of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.	In **six** countries where RRI is active, structural tenure reforms (legal, regulatory, policy) are adopted/advanced.	5 • *Nepal: Advocacy for Resource Rights* • *Tenure Reforms in Brazil* • *Tenure Reforms in China* • *Major Legislative Changes in Bolivia* • *Liberia Community Rights Law*	1
5.	More equitable forest governance, enterprise and conservation models are identified and disseminated and/or more broadly supported as a viable approach to support social and economic development.	In at least **five** cases, these models lead to an increase in community access to resources and markets.	3 • *China: Research on Tenure Reform and Small Scale Enterprise* • *Nepal: Preventing Roll Back and Advocating Community Conservation* • *Community Forestry and Enterprise in Nepal Increases Household Income*	2