



# NRGF Brief Note 6

## The “NRGF First Look Governance Questionnaire”: Advancing Good Natural Resource Governance the IUCN CEESP Way


The IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) Natural Resource Governance Framework (NRGF) Working Group is proud to share a significant milestone in its mission to advance just, inclusive, sustainable, and effective natural resource governance. Over the past year, the NRGF has been actively developing the “NRGF First Look Governance Questionnaire”, a pioneering, user-friendly, instrument designed to broaden access to governance assessment tools and encourage widespread policy makers and practitioner self-reflection on governance practices.

The “NRGF First Look Governance Questionnaire” is an innovative, quick, and accessible tool developed by the IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) through its Natural Resource Governance Framework (NRGF). Designed as an entry point into the complex world of natural resource governance assessment, this rapid self-assessment offers individuals, communities, and organizations a first glance at the strengths and gaps in their governance systems.

The name says it all: "First Look" signals that this is a preliminary, non-exhaustive tool, an invitation to begin a governance assessment journey, not a final evaluation. "Governance Questionnaire" emphasizes that the tool is simple, user-friendly, and survey-based, not a technical audit. Most importantly, the tool is rooted in the globally recognized principles of good natural resource governance developed by the IUCN CEESP NRGF Working Group.

Whether you are a community leader, a government official, or part of a civil society organization, the NRGF First Look Governance Questionnaire gives you the opportunity to quickly reflect on critical aspects of your natural resource governance practices, including inclusivity, fairness, accountability, and sustainability. The questionnaire takes about 30 minutes to complete and provides immediate, easy-to-understand results to help users identify where they are doing well and where improvement may be needed.

This friendly, accessible, and action-oriented tool is designed to spark curiosity, build awareness, and encourage deeper engagement with natural resource governance at from the site level to the landscape level and in diverse resource use context (including biodiversity exploitation, agriculture, mining). It is the perfect first step toward more just, inclusive, and effective governance, and it connects users directly to the broader NRGF assessment tool for those interested in more comprehensive assessments.



The “NRGF First Look Governance Questionnaire” (NRGF-FLGQ) delivers First insights using Quick questions that result in Smarter and more effective natural resource governance. The easy to use questionnaire is provided in the annex below.

## **Purpose and Vision**

The FLGQ aims to provide individuals, communities, organizations, and governance bodies with a quick yet insightful snapshot of the strengths and areas for improvement in their natural resource governance systems. It is designed to:

- Offer an accessible entry point to the comprehensive NRGF assessment framework.
- Empower users to reflect on their governance practices in terms of inclusiveness, equity, sustainability, accountability, and fairness.
- Stimulate interest in more detailed governance assessments and deeper engagement with the NRGF’s suite of tools.

The FLGQ reinforces the IUCN CEEPS’s commitment to social equity, cultural respect, and environmental sustainability by enabling users to identify gaps, celebrate strengths, and initiate locally driven good governance of natural resources improvements.

## **How the Tool Works**


As stated earlier, the FLGQ is a self-assessment tool that can be completed in about 30 minutes. It draws directly from the IUCN CEEPS NRGF’s globally recognized values principles and criteria guidance, making the tool both rigorous and relevant.

Participants begin by selecting the scale and resource landscape relevant to their governance context, be it local, national, regional, or sector-specific such as conservation, mining, or agriculture. They then proceed through a carefully curated questionnaire that assesses governance across key dimensions:

- Inclusive Decision-Making
- Recognition and Respect for Tenure Rights
- Respect for Diverse Cultures and Knowledge Systems
- Devolution of Authority
- Strategic Vision and Adaptability
- Coordination and Collaboration
- Equitable Sharing of Benefits
- Accountability
- Fair Rule of Law
- Access to Justice and Conflict Resolution

## **Immediate Feedback and Deeper Engagement**

Each question is answered with a simple “Yes”, or “No”, or “Not Sure”. Upon completion, the FLGQ produces results that reveal the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in good governance



of natural resources within a specific scale (site, landscape, national level) context and point in time. This immediate feedback allows users to:

- Quickly see where their governance systems are strong.
- Identify critical areas needing attention.
- Request further support or consultation from the IUCN CEESP NRGF team.
- Engage in a more comprehensive, on-the-ground governance assessment.

## Accessibility

Designed to be intuitive and accessible, the FLGQ is particularly suited for:

- Indigenous peoples and local communities.
- Government representatives.
- NGOs, conservation managers, and private sector actors involved in natural resource management.
- Multistakeholder governance bodies.

Users can self-identify their governance roles, ensuring that results can be interpreted in context and fostering cross-sector learning.

## Looking Ahead

The FLGQ is more than a standalone tool, It is a **gateway to deeper governance transformation**. By lowering barriers to participation and fostering self-reflection, the FLGQ will help amplify good governance practices and catalyze conversations about social equity, tenure security, cultural recognition, and sustainability.

The IUCN CEESP NRGF invites partners, practitioners, and community leaders worldwide to explore the FLGQ, provide feedback, and join in shaping its next stages of development. This tool is a significant step toward building a global culture of accountable, inclusive, and effective natural resource governance.

**For more information, visit the [IUCN CEESP NRGF webpage](#), and to request a full governance assessment, contact us at: [nrgf@ceesp.net](mailto:nrgf@ceesp.net)**

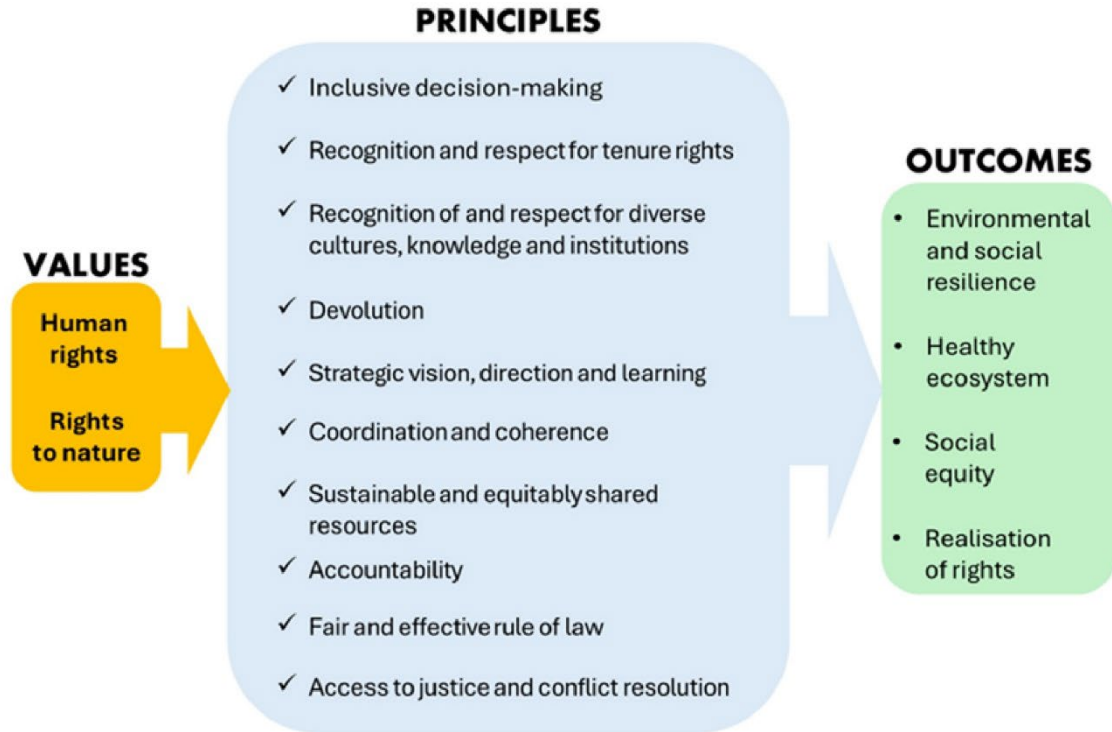
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### Reference

Springer, J., Campese, J. and Nakangu, B. 2021. *The Natural Resource Governance Framework: Improving governance for equitable and effective conservation*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2021.16.en>

## ANNEX 1



### **The IUCN CEESP rights-based natural resource governance framework**

Source: Adapted from Springer et al., 2021

## ANNEX 2

### The “NRGF First Look Governance Questionnaire”

Principle	First Look Questions	Yes	No	Not Sure
Principle 1: Inclusive Decision-Making	1. The national legal framework includes enforceable provisions for Indigenous peoples' and local communities' participation in natural resource governance decisions.			
	2. Management plans and policies demonstrably include the participation of all rights-holders, including women and youth.			
	3. Digital platforms used for decision-making are accessible and actively used by diverse stakeholder groups.			
	4. Regular community assemblies and consultation meetings are held with evidence of participation from all rights-holders.			
	5. Public hearings and participatory workshops are systematically conducted with clear representation of marginalized groups.			
	6. Structured, culturally sensitive engagement processes are implemented and documented across decision-making forums.			
	7. Feedback loops and mechanisms addressing power imbalances in stakeholder engagement are operational and effective.			
	8. Information-sharing systems provide timely, accessible data to all stakeholders through multiple reliable channels.			
Principle 2: Recognition and Respect for Tenure Rights	1. National laws explicitly recognize and protect tenure rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities.			
	2. Policies specifically identify and protect women's tenure rights.			
	3. Tenure arrangements enable communities to derive documented benefits from land and resource use.			
	4. Formal recognition processes for tenure rights are accessible and regularly used by rights-holders.			
	5. Conflict resolution procedures for overlapping tenure claims are clearly established and consistently applied.			

Principle	First Look Questions	Yes	No	Not Sure
Principle 3: Recognition and Respect for Diverse Cultures, Knowledge, and Institutions	1. Governance processes actively involve stakeholders from diverse cultural, biological, and linguistic backgrounds.			
	2. Traditional knowledge systems are formally integrated into governance strategies.			
	3. Governance strategies reflect the expressed needs and priorities of women, youth, Indigenous peoples, and local communities.			
Principle 4: Devolution	1. Governance authority is legally and operationally devolved to institutions closest to the natural resources.			
	2. Indigenous peoples and local communities have formal authority to shape policies affecting their lands.			
	3. Capacity-building resources (e.g., training, funding, technical support) are effectively provided to local institutions.			
Principle 5: Strategic Vision and Responsiveness to Change	1. Legal and policy frameworks articulate a clear, long-term strategic vision for natural resource governance.			
	2. Risk management and anticipatory measures are incorporated into governance frameworks.			
	3. Current environmental threats are effectively addressed through adaptive policies.			
	4. Environmental assessments and community feedback mechanisms are routinely used to inform governance decisions.			
Principle 6: Cooperation and Coherence	1. Cross-sectoral legal and policy frameworks show alignment in goals and principles.			
	2. Rights-holders participate in horizontal coordination platforms (e.g., multi-stakeholder forums) with documented outcomes.			
	3. Vertical coordination mechanisms across governance levels (e.g., interagency committees) are active and inclusive.			
	4. Institutional redundancy (e.g., joint monitoring, research collaborations) is in place to ensure system resilience.			

Principle	First Look Questions	Yes	No	Not Sure
Principle 7: Sustainable and Equitably Shared Benefits	1. Indigenous and local communities receive tangible benefits (e.g., income, services) linked to resource management activities.			
	2. Local communities' participation in resource management results in demonstrable benefit-sharing outcomes.			
	3. Transparent and publicly accessible benefit-sharing mechanisms are in place and used.			
	4. Mechanisms exist and are used to prevent or compensate for conservation-related losses among vulnerable groups.			
	5. Natural resource management practices include safeguards against over-exploitation and depletion.			
	6. Policies and practices actively prevent irreversible environmental harm.			
Principle 8: Accountability	1. Institutional roles and responsibilities for resource governance are clearly defined and publicly known.			
	2. Authorities issue regular, transparent reports on resource governance actions and outcomes.			
	3. Communities actively use mechanisms to hold authorities accountable (e.g., monitoring, feedback sessions).			
	4. Social and environmental safeguards are systematically applied and monitored.			
	5. FPIC processes are implemented prior to interventions affecting Indigenous lands and resources.			
	6. Anti-corruption mechanisms are in place and effectively constrain misuse of authority.			
Principle 9: Fair Rule of Law	1. Legal norms and sanctions for natural resource governance are clear and uncontested.			
	2. Community awareness programs ensure widespread understanding of legal frameworks.			
	3. Law enforcement bodies have sufficient resources and training to perform their functions effectively.			
	4. Violations of natural resource laws are thoroughly investigated and documented.			



Principle	First Look Questions	Yes	No	Not Sure
	5. Sanctions are applied consistently to deter non-compliance.			
	6. Legal and policy implementation results in equitable outcomes for all stakeholder groups.			
	7. Governance decisions reflect humanitarian principles and prioritize well-being.			
Principle 10: Access to Justice	1. Accessible formal and informal mechanisms exist for resolving land and resource conflicts.			
	2. Awareness programs ensure vulnerable and marginalized groups know how to access justice mechanisms.			
	3. Vulnerable groups regularly utilize dispute resolution mechanisms.			
	4. Conflict resolution mechanisms demonstrate impartiality and fairness in outcomes.			