

RECOFTC 2012–2013 STAKEHOLDER SURVEY REPORT

**Michael Miner and Melinda MacDonald
for International Briefing Associates Inc.**



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Executive summary

This report is based on three types of data gathered in late 2012 and early 2013: responses to a stakeholder survey (190 respondents), interviews with 11 targeted stakeholders (partners, training participants, trainers, donors, resource persons) and with 11 of the survey respondents and a document review. The survey and interviews were used to validate the direction of the RECOFTC Strategic Plan 2014–2018. The results indicate that stakeholders perceive RECOFTC as relevant and meeting its objectives.

The competence of RECOFTC staff and their expertise are recognized and well respected. The findings indicate that RECOFTC is contributing significantly to change, but, as with most international development work, it is difficult to single out specific attribution. One of its strengths is that RECOFTC works with many other international, regional and national stakeholders to create change. While there are many factors beyond the control of any one institution, the survey, interviews and documentation clearly affirm that RECOFTC is achieving its objectives, as indicated in the following specific conclusions.

Conclusions

1. Rating the performance of RECOFTC on eight criteria

Overall, respondents perceive that RECOFTC is very relevant; on average, the respondents rated RECOFTC's performance on each of the eight criteria (effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, accessibility, adequacy, responsiveness and reliability) as good or better.

2. Medium- and long-term impacts of RECOFTC's interventions

Even though RECOFTC was acknowledged as contributing to the medium- and long-term impacts on community forestry in Asia, few respondents or documentation included examples of such impact that could be directly attributed to RECOFTC.

3. Effectiveness addressing gender issues in programmes

Although many respondents do not fully understand gender mainstreaming or that men and women experience similar events differently, RECOFTC is perceived as placing increasing emphasis on integrating gender dimensions into all of its programming.

4. Relevance of RECOFTC's rights-based approach

Although many respondents see RECOFTC's relevance, many do not fully understand the rights-based approach, which needs to be described more fully in RECOFTC's documents and programmes.

5. Rating of services on four criteria

RECOFTC's capacity-building services, analytical services and communication all scored particularly highly in terms of relevance. Those services scored as good overall in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and impact (with impact ranking the lowest).

6. RECOFTC's organizational strengths and challenges

The respondents considered RECOFTC's excellent reputation in community forestry development and management as its major strength, an observation voiced by most interviewees. The major challenges are how wide the mandate should be, how to balance core funding with project funding and how far RECOFTC should go in terms of becoming the leader linking community forestry initiatives in Asia. Another challenge mentioned by several respondents was that

RECOFTC should develop and share a fully comprehensive integrated approach to community-based forestry management.

7. Quality of support and professional advice in community forestry and satisfaction with government services

Although government services were acknowledged as providing quality support and professional advice, many respondents indicated that they are not reaching the local community people who need it for the most part. A large number of respondents were not satisfied with the level of government services in community forestry.

8. Effectiveness of national institutions

The respondents acknowledged improvement in national institutions in the past few years but largely regard them as needing to be much more effective.

9. Effectiveness of RECOFTC's support through capacity building to beneficiaries and institutions

RECOFTC is perceived as more effective in its capacity building of people than it is in strengthening relevant institutions in countries where its activities are having relatively small effect. Where RECOFTC is working on national programmes and projects that include government staff, there are perceived capacity-building benefits for beneficiaries and institutions.

10. Improved practices that were scaled up or mainstreamed due to RECOFTC's influence

RECOFTC appears to have considerable influence on the rights of local people, issues of forest governance and on sharing benefits for local people. But it has less influence on policy and little on legislative processes. A large majority of the respondents did not think that RECOFTC interventions had been sufficiently scaled up or mainstreamed.

Outcomes in the logframe

Regarding the four outcomes that were covered by the survey and interviews (Outcome 3 was excluded), the following conclusions can be made about RECOFTC:

Outcome 1 – Policy and legislative processes – Moderately successful, with some examples.

Outcome 2 – Capacity building – Very successful, as perceived by almost all stakeholders, in the delivery of both products and services.

Outcome 4 – Piloting, demonstrating and practising community forestry – Very successful where it is taking place but needs to be expanded and scaled up.

Outcome 5 – National community forestry programmes – Minimally successful and will require a great deal of effort to have real impact.

Recommendations

1. Service delivery

RECOFTC should continue to carry out a combination of functional approaches, as it has been doing; its approaches are well regarded and contribute to achieving the overall objectives of RECOFTC.

2. Piloting, demonstrating and practising community forestry

RECOFTC needs to replicate the successful piloting, demonstrating and practising of community forestry programmes in more countries and more locations within countries to maximize the benefits from limited resources.

3. National institutions

RECOFTC needs to place increased effort on supporting national institutions in most countries to assist them towards improving their ability to deliver community forestry services to people.

4. Integrated country programmes

In its next Strategic Plan, RECOFTC needs to focus on developing country programmes that link the piloting, demonstrating and practising of community forestry with the need to strengthen national institutions and the services provided by RECOFTC at headquarters and in countries.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

More effort needs to be placed on the challenging area of collecting performance stories that demonstrate the real value of RECOFTC to people.

Lessons learned from conducting the stakeholder survey

1. The survey approach, introduction and questions were successful in eliciting responses from the targeted stakeholders and also attracted a substantial number of respondents from the Internet (open invitation).

2. The mixture of quantitative questions and questions requiring qualitative answers worked well and should be used again in the future to ensure maximum input.

3. Because this survey was only distributed in English, future surveys should be translated into local languages to increase input from community members, especially as RECOFTC country programmes expand.

Acknowledgements

The consultants from IBA would like to thank the staff of RECOFTC, both at the headquarters in Bangkok and in the country offices, for their kind help in reviewing the questions for the survey and suggesting interviewees. We would particularly like to thank Jim Bampton, Stefan Bepler and Bhawana Upadhyay for their assistance. Other staff members were helpful, and in particular we want to mention Country Coordinators Nguyen Quang Tan in Viet Nam and Yosef Arihadi in Indonesia.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

RECOFTC–The Center for People and Forest’s belief is that community forestry is key to sustainable forest management and helps to improve rural livelihoods, protect and enhance the environment, transform forest- and land-related conflicts and address many of the forest–climate change adaptation and mitigation issues. RECOFTC’s mission is to assist people in the Asia–Pacific region develop community forestry and manage their forest resources for optimum social, economic and environmental benefits.

1.2 Objectives

To seek feedback on how well it is perceived as being effective (as part of its new monitoring and evaluation system), RECOFTC commissioned an independently conducted stakeholder survey near the end of the 2008–2013 Strategic Plan programming. The survey of partners, training participants, trainers, donors, resource persons and others and complementing interviews aimed to document and gauge specific achievements, stakeholder perceptions and satisfaction with RECOFTC’s services and gather recommendations for the next strategic phase. The timing of the survey in late 2012 and early 2013 was intended to help validate the direction of RECOFTC’s strategic programme for 2013–2018.

The overall objective was to ensure that RECOFTC continues to be an effective regional organization for enhancing capacities at all levels and assist people in the Asia and Pacific region in developing community forestry and managing their forest resources, in line with its mission. Through this survey, RECOFTC looked to demonstrate that the organization is effective while learning how to improve its services, based on the feedback. The results were presented to the Board of Trustees (March 2013) in Bangkok. Small additions suggested by the Board were included in this finalized report.

2. Methodology

2.1 First stage – Online questionnaire

After reviewing provided written documentation on RECOFTC, the consulting team (who had worked with RECOFTC previously and were familiar with the activities) and RECOFTC headquarters monitoring and evaluation staff agreed on a series of questions for the stakeholder survey. The online questionnaire was made available through Survey Monkey (an online portal), which is accessed by clicking a web link. RECOFTC provided the consultants with contacts for a variety of stakeholders to be asked directly to participate in the survey. In addition, the survey was open to the public. The survey also asked if people were willing to be interviewed by a consultant following their completion of the survey. The stakeholder survey went live in October 2012 and the draft report was completed in February 2013.

2.2 Second stage – Telephone interviews

A sample of interviewees from the stakeholder list was called by a member of the consulting team. The sample included both local and international stakeholders in the focal countries, with a mix of government and non-government respondents. Guiding questions were used to elicit responses. The questions covered all the main areas that were included in the survey questionnaire and were intended to secure deeper insights from the interviewees.

Interviews were conducted by the two principal consultants as well as associates in the core countries (conducted in their native language). All interviews used the same questions and all associates were trained to ensure that there was no rater-reliability bias. To ensure that the response base was as broad as possible, only one person was interviewed per organization. Interviewees were also selected from all the target groups to ensure a balance of representatives from government, non-government organizations, trainers, trainees, donors, etc. A larger sample was interviewed from the six core countries where RECOFTC has worked the most during its current strategic phase.

In addition, personal interviews took place with selected high-level government officials, representatives of international stakeholders, donor representatives and community-level beneficiaries.

2.3 Respondents profile

The response rate to the survey was quite good, with a balance between respondents from the targeted stakeholders (particularly in Southeast Asia) and people who randomly found the survey. Overall, 190 people participated in the survey. A total of 40 people were interviewed (primarily by phone, but with some face to face); of them, 29 people also participated in the survey.

Ten interviews were conducted in a language other than English and the responses were translated into English. As planned, the majority (34 of the 40) of the interviewees were from or based in the six core countries.

Table 1: Survey response profile

	Targeted stakeholders (invited to participate)	Public access (open to anyone online)	Total
Southeast Asia	57	26	83
Other Asian countries	12	36	48
Rest of the world	8	28	36
Partial responses (all countries)	9	14	23
Total	86	104	190

According to the monitoring and evaluation staff, RECOFTC works directly with at least 2,000 people a year. Thus, the sample size of 201 people is approximately 10 percent, which is generally accepted as a valid proportion. Of them, nearly half (86 in the survey and 11 in interviews, or 97) were targeted by RECOFTC; 104 people randomly responded to the survey questionnaire, which they found when it was available online. For an open survey, this is an excellent response rate, which suggests a broad interest in community forestry and in what RECOFTC is doing. It appears from this response, at least, that RECOFTC may have a wide indirect reach, but that is difficult to measure.

Additionally, the consultants reviewed various RECOFTC documents, including the 2010 and 2011 *Internal Annual Reports*, *Mid-Term Review of the 2008–2013 Strategic Plan*, the logframe and background documents on programmes and services.

2.4 Limitations

Despite the strong response to the survey and the selected interviews, it was not possible to bring together a focus group discussion because the stakeholders were located far apart. Thus, individual interviews were conducted as the major source of information to augment the survey findings. Language was another limitation, which was overcome by including members of the consulting team who spoke the local language. RECOFTC works with a large number of cultures and environments, each with their own challenges.

2.5 Data analysis

The consultants collated the survey results and interview responses (section 3). Both forms of responses were then analysed along with the reviewed documents for conclusions and recommendations.

3. Survey findings

This section presents a summary of the findings from the online survey, combined with observations made during the interviews. The questions appear as they did in the questionnaire (the initial questions referred to respondent's personal details); the numbers in parentheses in each table represent the total survey responses for that item. The highest rating appears in bold.

3.1 Role, mandate and impact of RECOFTC

3.1.1 RECOFTC's role and mandate in community forestry

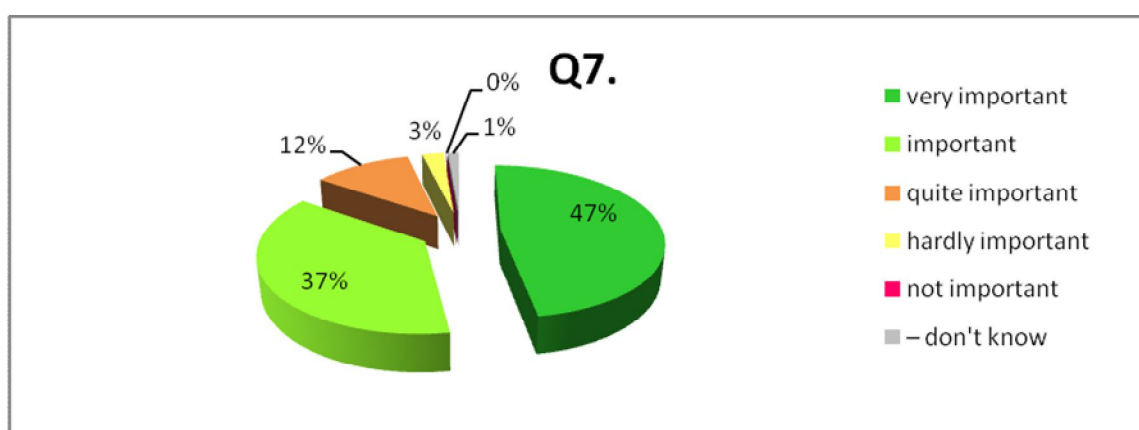
A total of 86 percent of respondents who answered question 7 on RECOFTC's role and mandate perceived it as very important or important – a finding similar to what was reported in the 2007 and 2011 surveys in response to the same question. Similarly, all 40 interviewees said that RECOFTC fills a gap in community forestry and has a unique role linking villages or communities to the international cooperation level (national or international level). According to one of the survey respondents who was also interviewed, "RECOFTC has an important and strong role to play in strengthening the regional network and contributing to capacity building and community forestry development at national and regional levels."

Another person interviewed also explained, "RECOFTC activities on community forestry are very good for countries in terms of training, sharing experiences and creating a platform for exchange of knowledge." Nearly everyone who was interviewed thought that RECOFTC is performing its work well; but many also thought the need is great and that the more that RECOFTC can do to support community forestry the better.

Question 7 on rating RECOFTC's role and mandate

7. How do you see RECOFTC's role and mandate in community forestry?								
	Very important	Important	Quite important	Hardly important	Not important	Don't know	Rating average	Total responses
	47.4% (74)	37.2% (58)	11.5% (18)	2.6% (4)	0.0% (0)	1.3% (2)	4.26	156
Answered question								156
Skipped question								34

Note: (Number of respondents)



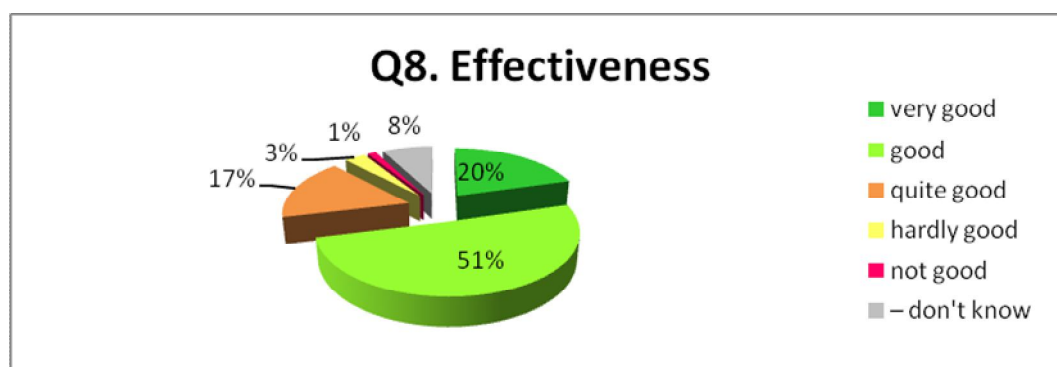
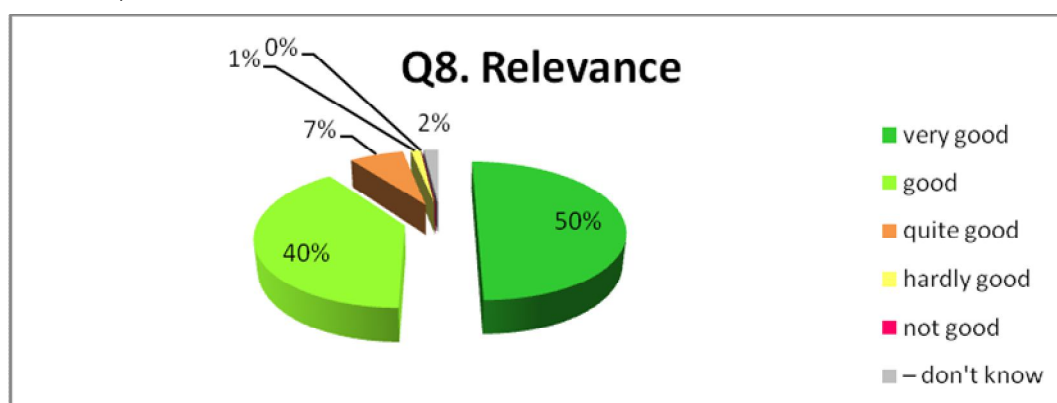
3.1.2 RECOFTC's overall programme

The ratings on the eight criteria indicate that RECOFTC is viewed as very relevant, with 50 percent of the survey respondents finding it very good; nearly 90 percent of the respondents rated the overall programme's relevance as very good or good. More than 70 percent of the respondents gave each of the remaining seven criteria a positive rating. Of the eight criteria, sustainability and adequacy received the lowest ratings. After relevance, the next highest rated criteria were responsiveness and accessibility. This indicates that RECOFTC's work is responsive, but there are some long-term fears about sustaining that work. This finding was substantiated by most interviewees who wanted 'more of the same' institutionalized to ensure that it will continue. They also thought that RECOFTC needs to leverage up what it is doing well in more countries in Asia in terms of more regional programmes and increased international presence.

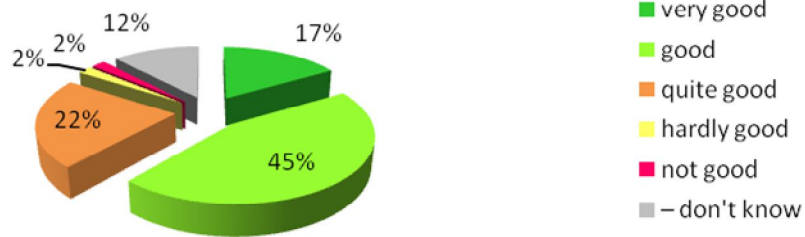
Question 8 on rating RECOFTC's overall programme through eight criteria

8. How do you rate RECOFTC's overall programme in terms of:								
	Very good	Good	Quite good	Hardly good	Not good	Don't know	Rating average	Total responses
Relevance	50.0% (78)	39.7% (62)	7.1% (11)	1.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.9% (3)	4.33	156
Effectiveness	20.5% (32)	50.6% (79)	16.7% (26)	3.2% (5)	1.3% (2)	7.7% (12)	3.63	156
Efficiency	16.7% (26)	44.9% (70)	22.4% (35)	1.9% (3)	1.9% (3)	12.2% (19)	3.36	156
Sustainability	19.9% (31)	42.3% (66)	19.2% (30)	7.1% (11)	1.9% (3)	9.6% (15)	3.42	156
Accessibility	26.3% (41)	45.5% (71)	19.2% (30)	3.8% (6)	0.6% (1)	4.5% (7)	3.79	156
Adequacy	17.3% (27)	45.5% (71)	20.5% (32)	5.8% (9)	0.0% (0)	10.9% (17)	3.42	156
Responsiveness	28.2% (44)	41.0% (64)	18.6% (29)	3.8% (6)	1.3% (2)	7.1% (11)	3.70	156
Reliability	26.9% (42)	44.9% (70)	17.3% (27)	3.8% (6)	0.6% (1)	6.4% (10)	3.74	156
Answered question								156
Skipped question								34

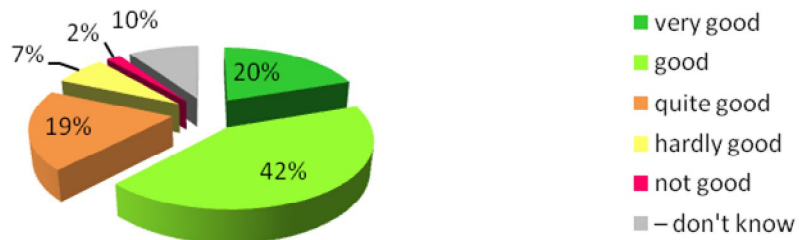
Note: (Number of respondents)



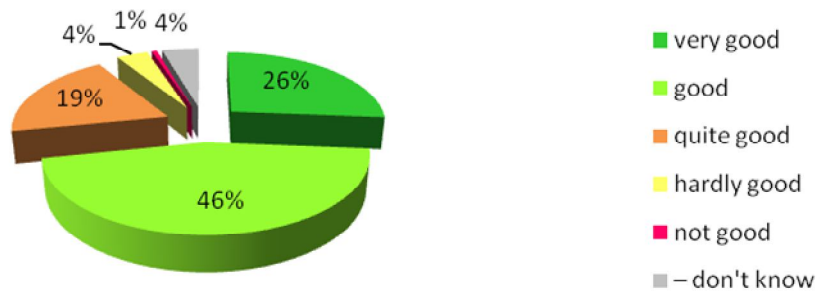
Q8. Efficiency



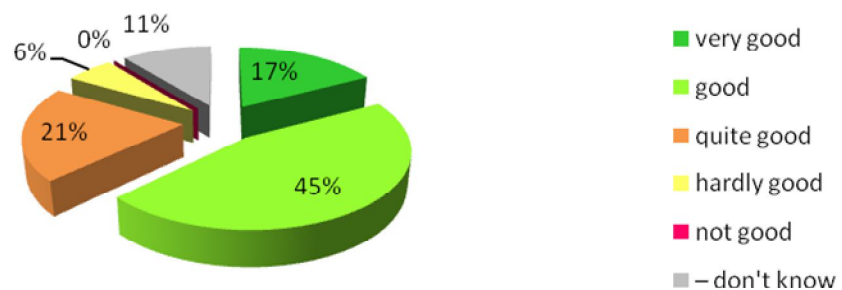
Q8. Sustainability

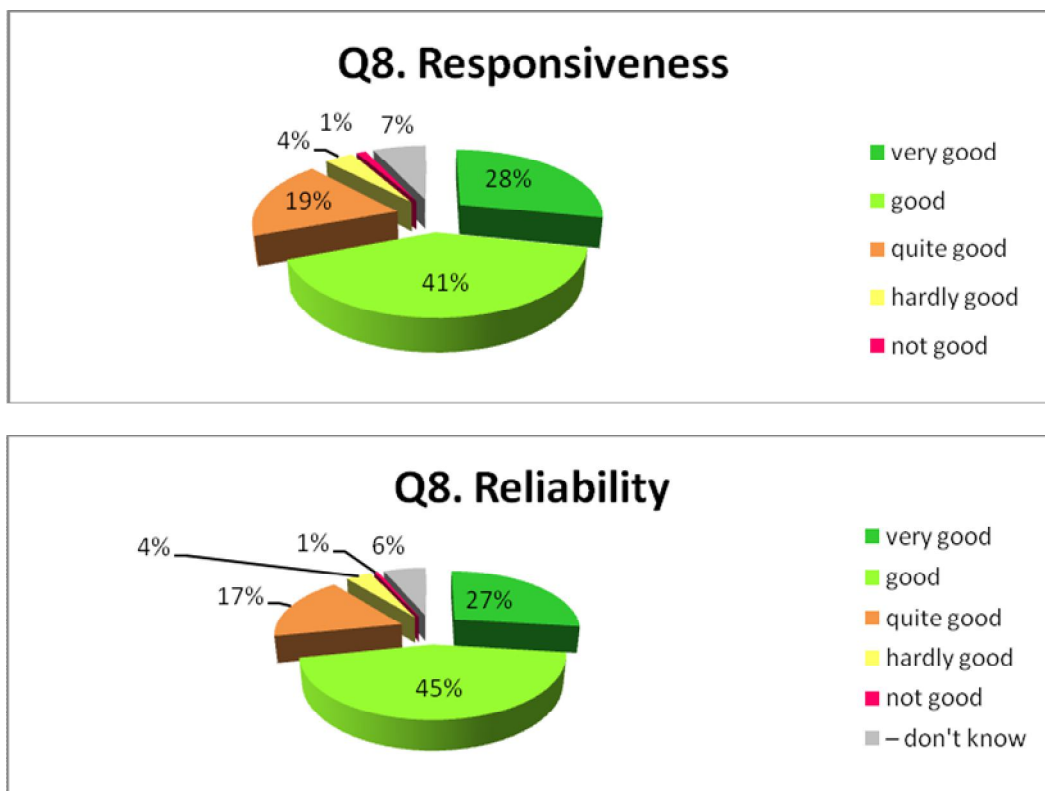


Q8. Accessibility



Q8. Adequacy





3.1.3 Medium- and long-term impacts of RECOFTC's interventions




Most respondents said they could see that RECOFTC has contributed medium- to long-term impacts. For example, in Cambodia this refers to the 200 community forestry sites in ten provinces that have been legalized with RECOFTC assistance. It includes the impact of applications of skills acquired through RECOFTC training and training for trainers courses on community forestry management, which have helped RECOFTC partners achieve the community forestry targets. One survey respondent (from the Mekong region) wrote when asked to explain, "I have seen impacts of RECOFTC on the field of community forestry ... many people have been trained by RECOFTC who are now working in the forestry sector. They have gained certain skills and knowledge ... which are very useful for the forestry sector in their country."

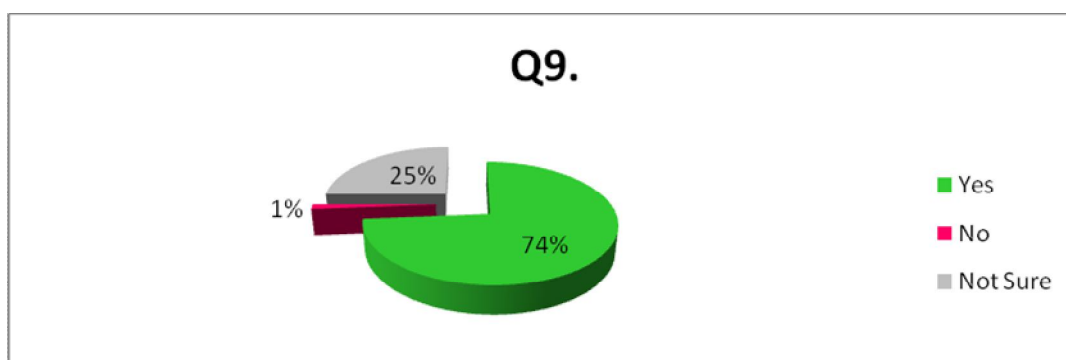
Several respondents noted the importance of having operations in core countries that showcase and demonstrate what can be achieved in community forestry. Many respondents pointed to the importance of materials published in a local language for maximum impact. They also noted the importance of RECOFTC linking with other organizations, including educational institutions and forest-related development agencies. Promoting links with regional networks is also helping share knowledge and new approaches. The respondents mentioned that the high level of qualifications, experience and attitude of RECOFTC staff has helped with the transfer of knowledge and skills. One respondent located outside the Mekong region remarked, "In Indonesia, RECOFTC has contributed to community forestry policy and implementation progress indirectly. Some community forestry facilitators from NGOs, private companies or government have close relations with RECOFTC. A lot of them are alumni from RECOFTC training." Models presented by RECOFTC have influenced African respondents and are being applied, as one survey respondent outside the region

explained, “through partners and consultancy services to Tanzania and East Africa in general”. The people who responded to the survey online (open invitation) indicated that the capacity and skills among RECOFTC staff are having long-term impact on their ability to provide training and capacity improvements in participatory forest management and REDD+ to communities.

One interviewee commented, “RECOFTC is quite low profile when it comes to advocacy and puts more effort into training, which is a very long-term way of getting change, so it is hard to trace connections between RECOFTC's hard work and actual changes for forests and people. This is not a criticism but an attempt to make a factual observation.”

Question 9 on whether RECOFTC's interventions have any medium- or long-term impact

9. Do you see medium- or long-term impacts of RECOFTC's interventions?			
		Response %	Responses
Yes		73.7%	115
No		1.3%	2
Not sure		25.0%	39
Can you please explain?			102
Answered question			156
Skipped question			34



3.2 Gender equality and the rights-based approach

3.2.1 Effectiveness in addressing gender issues in programmes and projects

RECOFTC's performance on addressing gender issues scored relatively low in comparison with other questions in both the survey and in the interviews. Nearly 29 percent of the survey respondents reported they didn't know whether RECOFTC's approach to gender issues was effective or not. A typical comment of many respondents was that gender issues should become more integrated into RECOFTC programmes and publications. Several respondents noted that although gender issues are present in RECOFTC activities, the gender sensitivity may not be effective because effectiveness implies the potential to make sustainable change. But with insufficient gender-based data, which is a requisite for analysis and the design of advocacy for gender-supporting policies, sustainable change is not likely to take place. Another perspective shared by a few respondents is that gender issues need to be integrated throughout all activities and programmes, including benefit-sharing schemes. (RECOFTC only recently added a gender specialist to its staff and now places more emphasis on gender issues.) One respondent suggested that it would be useful to explore how gender issues have

been addressed through social forestry (community forestry) in several locations in the region by highlighting the role of women through stories and statistics.

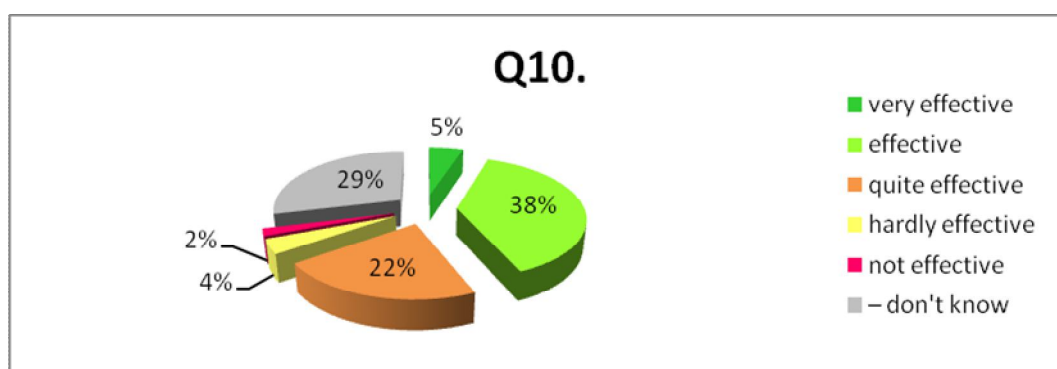
For many respondents, gender still refers to the numbers of women and men participating in activities and not something deeper. As one respondent pointed out, “Gender is not a main focus. We work with forest-dependent communities. Most people going to the forest are women, and hence we try to provide alternative income-generating activities to forest-dependent people.” Many of the respondents did not think gender issues should have a special emphasis and indicated they did not understand the need for an integrated approach on gender.

Overall, many respondents did not fully understand gender mainstreaming or that men and women can experience the same event differently. To address issues related to gender – to RECOFTC’s credit – a full-time gender expert was hired in 2012. One of her first activities was to carry out an internal survey, including with regional office staff. What she learned is that the largest challenge to improving performance on gender sensitivity was the lack of gender-based training; 69 percent of the staff indicated that was the biggest problem, followed by 11 percent who did not regard it as an organizational priority. This situation is a focus now; in 2013, RECOFTC received a gender-related grant that will allow a second professional to be hired to help integrate gender perspectives into programming.

Question 10 on rating RECOFTC’s treatment of gender issues in programming and projects

10. How effectively does RECOFTC address gender issues in its programmes and projects?								
	Very effective	Effective	Quite effective	Hardly effective	Not effective	Don't know	Rating average	Total responses
	5.1% (8)	38.5% (60)	21.8% (34)	3.8% (6)	1.9% (3)	28.8% (45)	2.54	156
	Can you please explain?							82
	Answered question							156
	Skipped question							34

Note: (Number of respondents)



3.2.2 Relevance of RECOFTC’s rights-based approach

Responses about the relevance of the rights-based approach were more positive than they were for the gender-related question, but some respondents and interviewees did not understand the rights-based approach either and its importance to RECOFTC. Many did not know what RECOFTC was doing in terms of such an approach. A typical comment from the survey respondents, for instance: “While I

agree with the rights-based approach to forest activities and community engagement, I am not familiar enough with RECOFTC's overall (and more recent programming) to adequately assess this."

Many respondents did not understand that the rights-based approach is at the heart of RECOFTC's work – supporting the rights of communities. For example, one survey respondent wrote: "I think that RECOFTC's competency is capacity building on community forestry and use of the multi-stakeholder approach to develop community forestry. I know RECOFTC also works on conflict over the land and has training on conflict management, and I believe they also talk about the rights-based approach. But it is not the main part of RECOFTC's competency." (Of course, RECOFTC's rights-based approach is intended to empower communities (rights holders) while training government and other officials (duty bearers) working with communities to build up their capacity and understanding of their obligations to rights holders.)

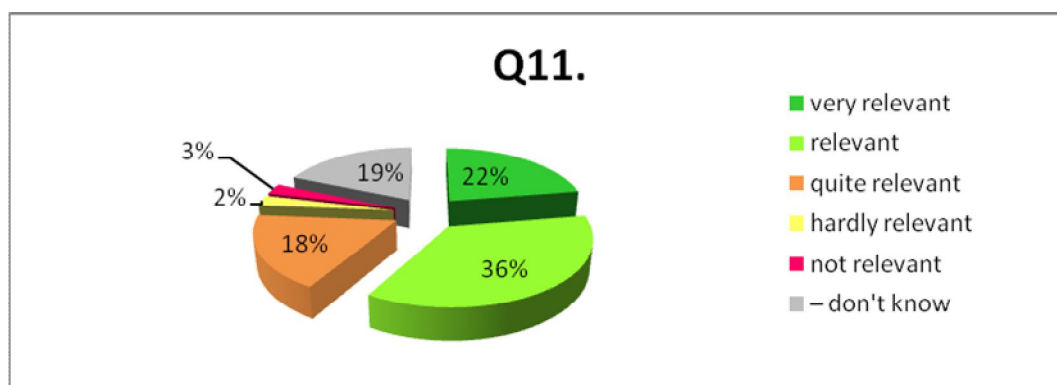
Several respondents did understand that protecting the rights of the community is central to RECOFTC's work. For example, one survey respondent wrote: "Secure access to natural resources is essential for successful and effective [community forestry] interventions; whether these resources are made available through rights-based approaches or based on other principles, such as customary rights, is not central. But protecting the rights of the community is central!"

As well, many respondents clearly understood the rights-based approach. As one respondent noted, "The work of RECOFTC in engaging local communities in forest issues is extremely important – this includes the work of RECOFTC influencing governments to recognize communities' right to resources." Respondents acknowledged that RECOFTC works closely with government agencies and is doing well in providing training and consultation services in community forestry development.

Question 11 on the relevance of RECOFTC's rights-based approach

11. How relevant is RECOFTC's rights-based approach?								
	Very relevant	Relevant	Quite relevant	Hardly relevant	Not relevant	Don't know	Rating average	Total responses
	22.4% (35)	35.9% (56)	17.9% (28)	2.6% (4)	2.6% (4)	18.6% (29)	3.17	156
	Why?							74
Answered question								156
Skipped question								34

Note: (Number of respondents)



3.3 Ratings for RECOFTC's services

This section reflects the respondents' ratings on three of the four main functional areas of RECOFTC: capacity-building services, analytical services and communication services (the fourth is pilots and demonstration but is addressed in questions 22 and 23). The question asked for a rating of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of each of those three services.

All three types of services scored highest in terms of relevance, while they all scored lowest for impact. This is consistent with the overall ratings for RECOFTC, discussed with question 7 previously. The high rating for relevance is not surprising because almost everyone interested in this subject cares about the mandate of RECOFTC and believes in it. The large group of respondents rated the effectiveness and efficiency of the three services as good (as opposed to very good), which still indicates that overall most respondents think that the organization is doing well, given its constraints. That impact rated lowest also is not surprising because it is the most difficult to assess, and the variable over which RECOFTC has the least direct control. Given this, the rating is still very high: 81.7 percent of respondents rated RECOFTC as quite good or better in terms of impact (58.6 percent scored it as good or very good).

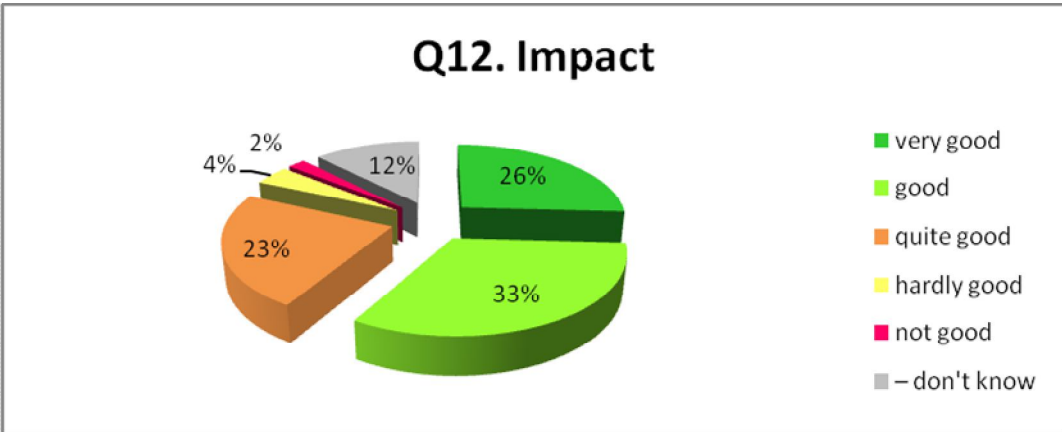
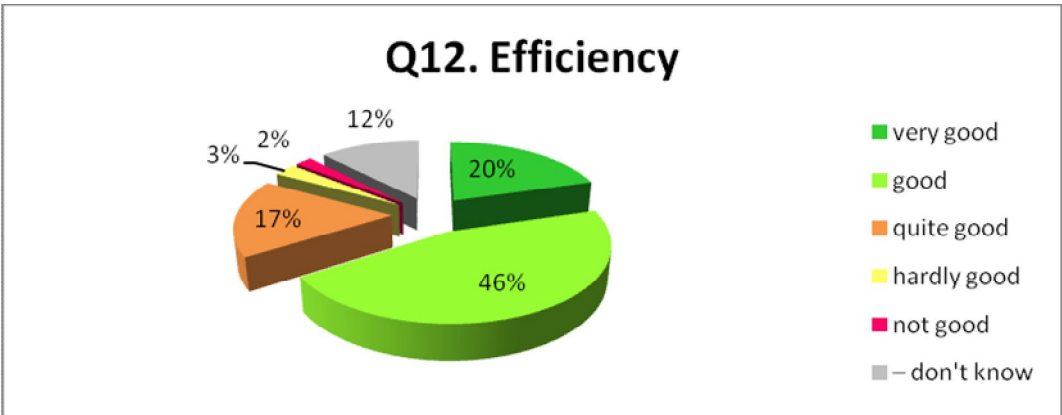
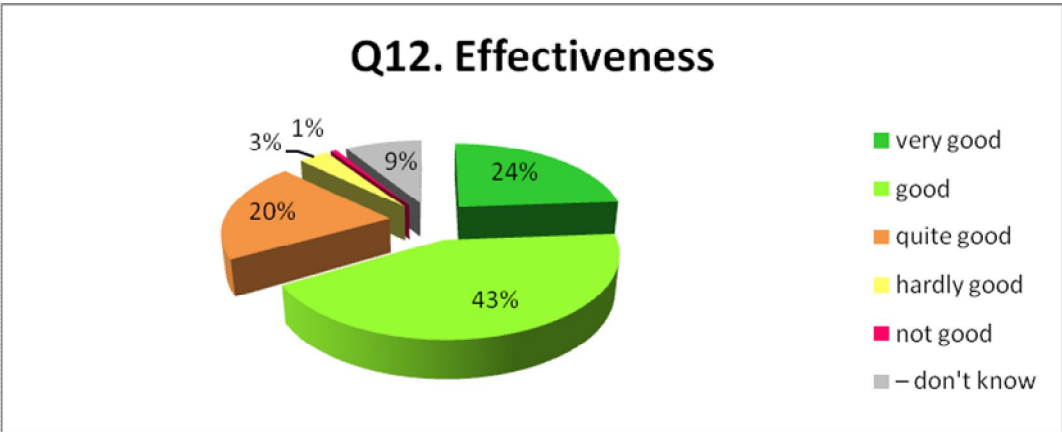
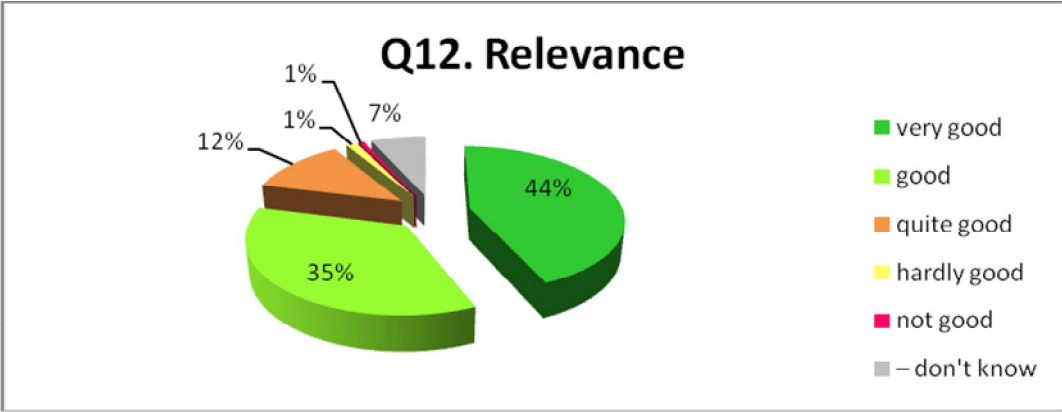
3.3.1 Capacity-building services

The capacity-building services scored well on all four measures – relevance, at 78.9 percent; effectiveness, at 66.7 percent; efficiency, at 66 percent; and impact, at 58.6 percent. Specifically cited with praise were the training courses and the training for trainers courses (both often characterized as “excellent” in the interviews). Of course, capacity building of people is easier than capacity building of institutions. While RECOFTC is regarded as doing an excellent job building up the capacity of people, according to some respondents, only some institutions use these services in a way that really changes their organization or government department.

Question 12 on rating RECOFTC's capacity-building services

12. Please rate RECOFTC's capacity-building services in terms of								
	Very good	Good	Quite good	Hardly good	Not good	Don't know	Rating average	Total responses
Relevance	43.5% (64)	35.4% (52)	12.2% (18)	1.4% (2)	0.7% (1)	6.8% (10)	3.99	147
Effectiveness	23.8% (35)	42.9% (63)	20.4% (30)	3.4% (5)	0.7% (1)	8.8% (13)	3.59	147
Efficiency	20.4% (30)	45.6% (67)	17.0% (25)	2.7% (4)	2.0% (3)	12.2% (18)	3.43	147
Impact	25.9% (38)	32.7% (48)	23.1% (34)	4.1% (6)	2.0% (3)	12.2% (18)	3.39	147
Answered question								147
Skipped question								43

Note: (Number of respondents)



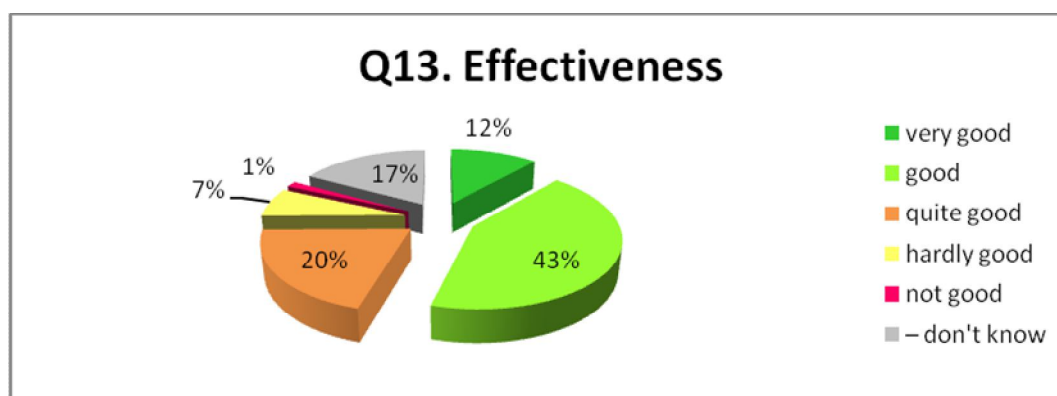
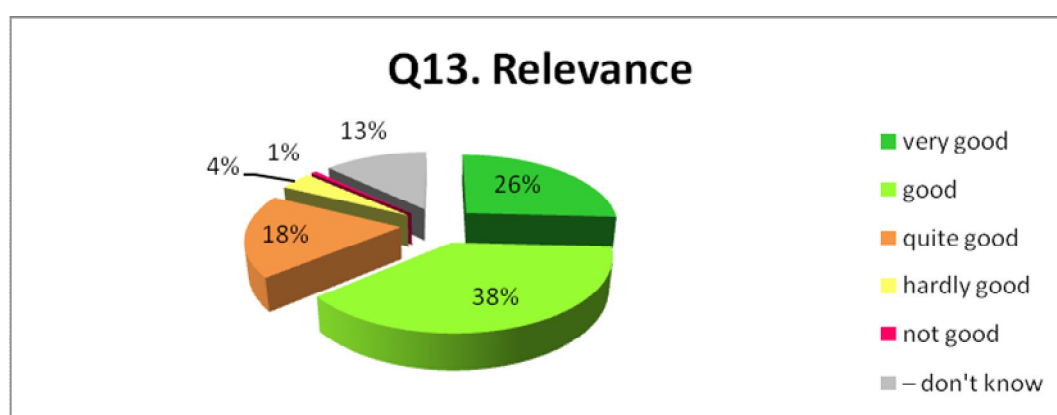
3.3.2 Analytical services

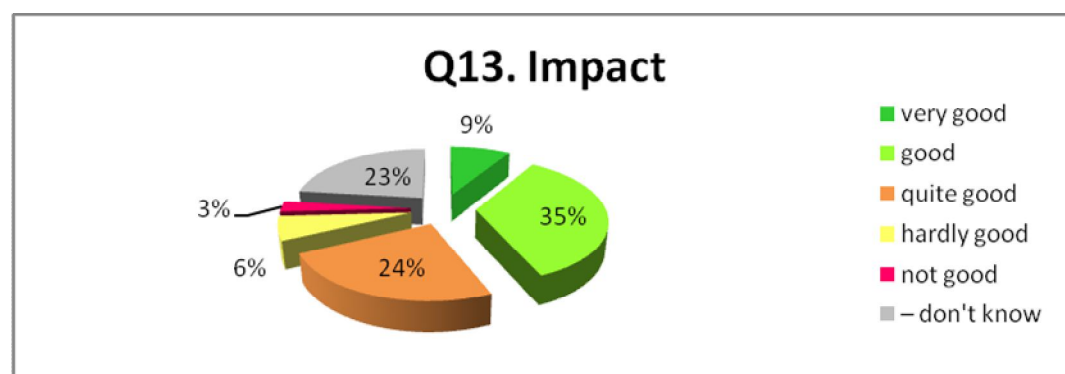
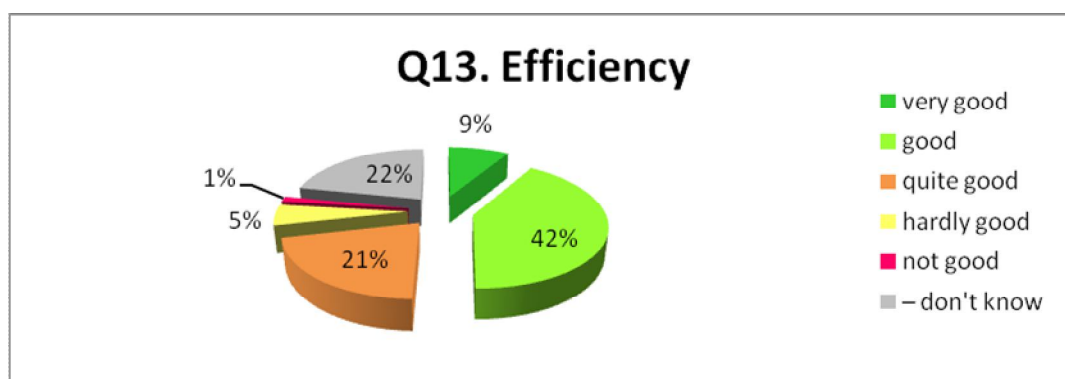
The analytical services (research, analysis and synthesis) scored slightly lower than the other two types of services, although they received positive ratings on all four measures: relevance, at 64 percent; effectiveness, at 54.5 percent; efficiency, at 50.5 percent; and impact, at 43.5 percent. Much of the interviewed respondents' praise singled out RECOFTC's policy documents, noting that the best of such documents were both cutting edge and grounded. Importantly, approximately 20 percent of all 190 survey respondents did not know what was meant by analytical services. This could be because the results of the analytical services have not been publicized sufficiently.

Question 13 on rating RECOFTC's analytical services

13. Please rate RECOFTC's research, analysis and synthesis services in terms of								
	Very good	Good	Quite good	Hardly good	Not good	Don't know	Rating average	Total responses
Relevance	25.9% (38)	38.1% (56)	18.4% (27)	4.1% (6)	0.7% (1)	12.9% (19)	3.46	147
Effectiveness	11.6% (17)	42.9% (63)	20.4% (30)	6.8% (10)	1.4% (2)	17.0% (25)	3.05	147
Efficiency	8.8% (13)	41.5% (61)	21.1% (31)	5.4% (8)	1.4% (2)	21.8% (32)	2.86	147
Impact	8.8% (13)	34.7% (51)	24.5% (36)	6.1% (9)	2.7% (4)	23.1% (34)	2.71	147
answered question								147
skipped question								43

Note: (Number of respondents)





3.3.3 Communication services

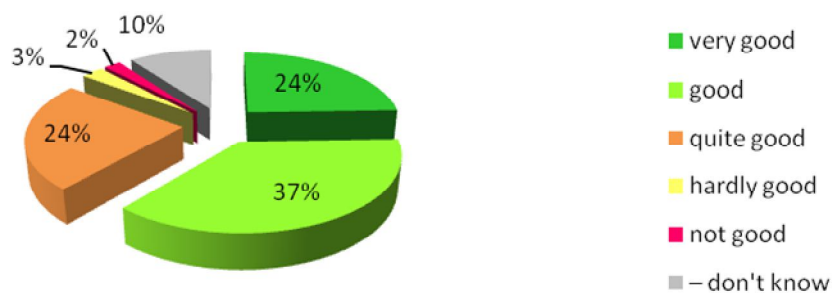
The communication services scored the highest on all four measures: relevance, at 80.3 percent; effectiveness, at 74.8 percent; efficiency, at 70.1 percent; and impact, at 61.2 percent. In the interviews, the RECOFTC website, publications and brochures were cited most often in positive terms.

Question 14 on rating RECOFTC's communication services

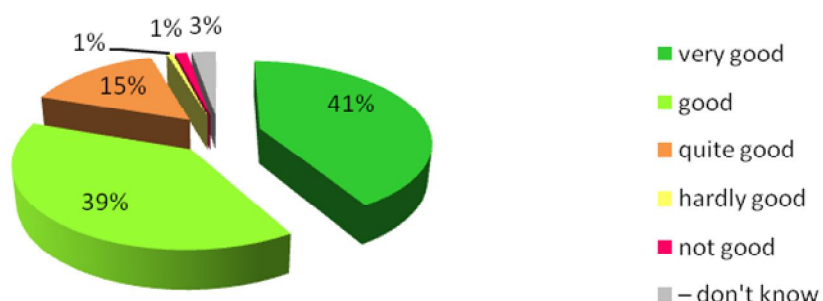
14. Please rate RECOFTC's communication services in terms of								
	Very good	Good	Quite good	Hardly good	Not good	Don't know	Rating average	Total responses
Relevance	41.5% (61)	38.8% (57)	15.0% (22)	0.7% (1)	1.4% (2)	2.7% (4)	4.10	147
Effectiveness	33.3% (49)	41.5% (61)	16.3% (24)	1.4% (2)	2.0% (3)	5.4% (8)	3.86	147
Efficiency	32.7% (48)	37.4% (55)	18.4% (27)	2.0% (3)	2.0% (3)	7.5% (11)	3.74	147
Impact	24.5% (36)	36.7% (54)	23.8% (35)	2.7% (4)	2.0% (3)	10.2% (15)	3.48	147
Answered question								147
Skipped question								43

Note: (Number of respondents)

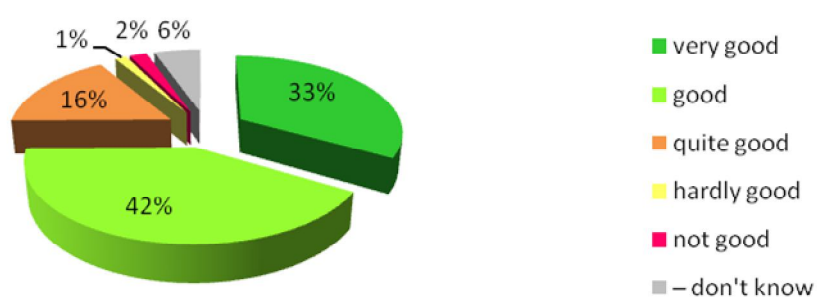
Q14. Impact



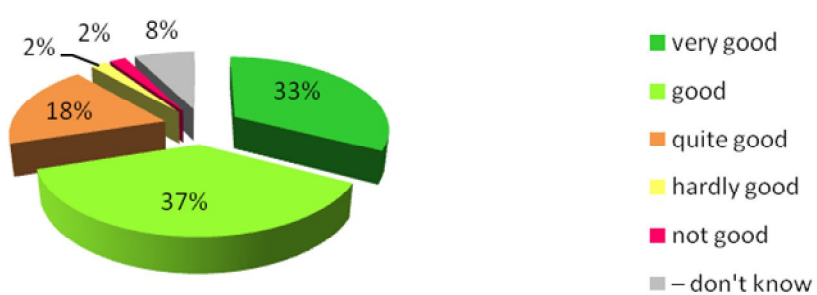
Q14. Relevance



Q14. Effectiveness



Q14. Efficiency



3.4 RECOFTC's organizational strengths and challenges

3.4.1 Organizational strengths

Almost half (82) of the survey respondents chose not to respond to this question. Of those who did, almost uniformly their comments indicated they regarded RECOFTC as having a high degree of professional competence in community forestry. A typical comment, for instance: "I recognize RECOFTC as a strong regional hub to help in capacity building in community forestry in the Asia-Pacific region." Many respondents cited RECOFTC's organizational strength as delivering on its mission, in partnership with governments and other players pushing for change in community forestry. A large number of respondents considered RECOFTC's staff as a strength. One respondent, indicative of many sentiments, described the staff as "knowledgeable and capable" with "direct linkages to on-the-ground activities while maintaining strong ties to higher-level policy and regional/international organizations" The large majority of respondents thought that RECOFTC has the knowledge and experience to respond effectively at the local, national, regional and international levels to the regional and global changes in development and forest-based priorities.

Many respondents see RECOFTC as able to initiate discussions on topics that others may be reluctant to cover or elevate issues of importance at the community level to the national or regional level, such as land degradation or sandstorms, and attract other players to the issue. Many respondents remarked that RECOFTC is the only international organization specializing in capacity building for community forestry and devolved forest management. Many also see it as an organization that is positioned to influence government on behalf of communities and correct misunderstandings by local authorities dealing with community forestry. Its Board of Trustees and its strong relationship with long-term donors help broaden the organization's influence, according to several respondents. Additionally, according to most of the survey respondents, RECOFTC has earned its "excellent reputation" in community forestry development and management. This perception was echoed by most of the interviewees. Both the targeted respondents and those who responded randomly to the survey were similarly positive about RECOFTC's strengths.

Question 15 on RECOFTC's organizational strengths

15. What do you see as RECOFTC's organizational strengths?		Responses
		108
Answered question		108
Skipped question		82

3.4.2 Organizational challenges

Again, almost half (84) of the survey respondents chose not to answer this question. The challenges that respondents cited largely centred on how RECOFTC deals with its own recent success. For example, should RECOFTC position its mandate narrowly or widely? RECOFTC has evolved from a small training centre to a hub for community forestry and is becoming a globally known initiator of research and analysis, new initiatives (associated with REDD+) and country programmes, such as the Cambodian programme, which is recognized as of high quality by observers both inside and outside the country.

Now that RECOFTC is known globally, several respondents suggested that a new challenge for the organization is to connect with other international and regionally based organizations, including those in Africa and Latin America. This shift would place RECOFTC more solidly at the cutting edge of new collaborations, new ideas and new approaches that it can then share around Asia.

The majority of respondents said they support an expanding role for RECOFTC and see RECOFTC as the organization that should lead what one respondent calls “a collaboration of community forestry initiatives among countries”. Some respondents mentioned the danger of RECOFTC moving in directions (fashionable topics) for which there is funding but that could jeopardize its central mandate in community forestry. In addition to the core funding RECOFTC receives, it is clear to many respondents that RECOFTC can compete with other forest-based or non-government organizations for funding because it is now able to leverage significant funding for projects.

A specific challenge mentioned by several respondents was the language barrier for junior personnel from many countries and the need for RECOFTC to produce more materials in local languages. Although RECOFTC is already doing this, the survey and interview responses indicate that this practice and those products (in national languages) are not sufficiently known or accessible to possible users. In RECOFTC’s work with ethnic minorities, many beneficiaries do not speak their national language and translators are necessary. Translation into a large number of minority languages would be difficult, but key documents could be translated to ensure that these communities all know what RECOFTC does and what it could do for their community.

Another specific challenge is how best to demonstrate how people trained by RECOFTC are applying their skills in practice. Many respondents said they know it is happening but they could not think of any particular example.

Based on the survey and interview responses, the primary challenges relate to how wide the mandate should be, how to balance core funding with project funding and whether RECOFTC can and should become the leader in linking community forestry initiatives in Asia. A positive way to view this is to see project funding as a way for community forestry and national institutions to provide more and better services and leverage what they are doing to have maximum impact.

Question 16 on RECOFTC’s organizational challenges

16. What do you see as RECOFTC’s organizational challenges?		Responses
		106
Answered question		106
Skipped question		84

3.5 Quality of support and professional advice in community forestry

3.5.1 Stakeholders’ support to community forestry

The responses to this and the next question are revealing. Responses to question 18 asking respondents to rate the general quality of support and advice that organizations and institutions provide on community forestry were divided on the quality of what is available in the region. But a large portion of respondents, at 44.4 percent, think that communities consider the service provided

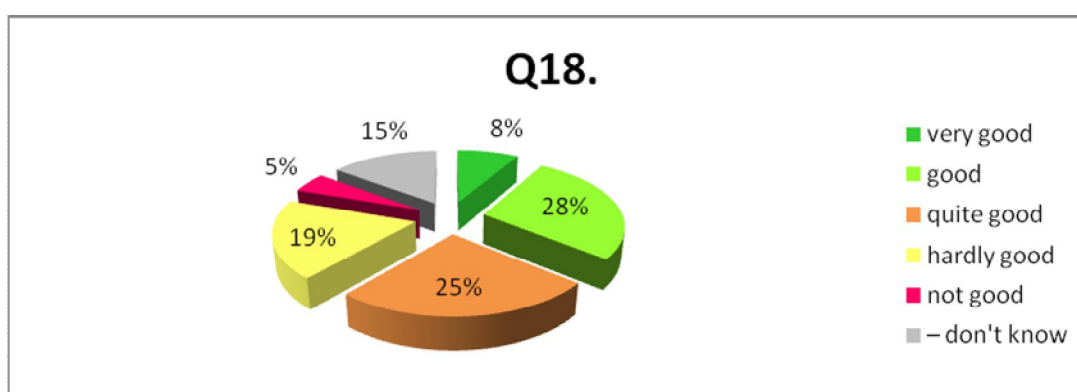
by their government or other service providers as hardly satisfying or they were not satisfied (question 20).

Similarly, most of the interviewees said that even though there is quality professional advice available beyond RECOFTC, it was largely not available to the people who need it most, either because of a language or cultural issue or just not delivered. The responses indicate a range of reasons for the hardly satisfying rating. For example, poorly paid NGO staff working in this area (who thus don't take their work seriously); inadequate budget, including the lack of materials and equipment; weak support for community forestry and/or government opposition to it; weak or split leadership in support of community forestry; duplication of services (if money can be found elsewhere there is no need to resolve any issues); and the volatility of the demands of the lumber industry.

Question 18 on rating the quality of support and professional advice

18. Please rate the general quality of support and professional advice given by stakeholders to the community forestry sector (including to local communities) in your country								
	Very good	Good	Quite good	Hardly good	Not good	Don't know	Rating average	Total responses
	8.5% (12)	27.5% (39)	25.4% (36)	19.0% (27)	4.9% (7)	14.8% (21)	2.71	142
Answered question								142
Skipped question								48

Note: (Number of respondents)

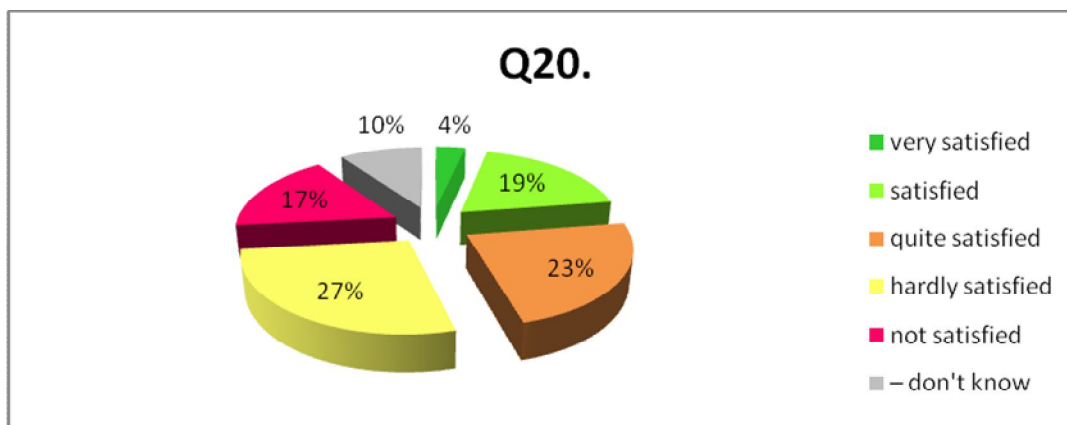


3.5.2 Services to the community forestry sector

Question 20 on whether people in community forestry sector are satisfied with the government and non-government service providers

20. Do you think people in the community forestry sector (including communities) are satisfied with the overall service from government and other organizations/institutions?								
	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Quite satisfied	Hardly satisfied	Not satisfied	Don't know	Rating average	Total responses
	3.5% (5)	19.0% (27)	23.2% (33)	27.5% (39)	16.9% (24)	9.9% (14)	2.35	142
Answered question								142
Skipped question								48

Note: (Number of respondents)



3.6 Effectiveness of national institutions

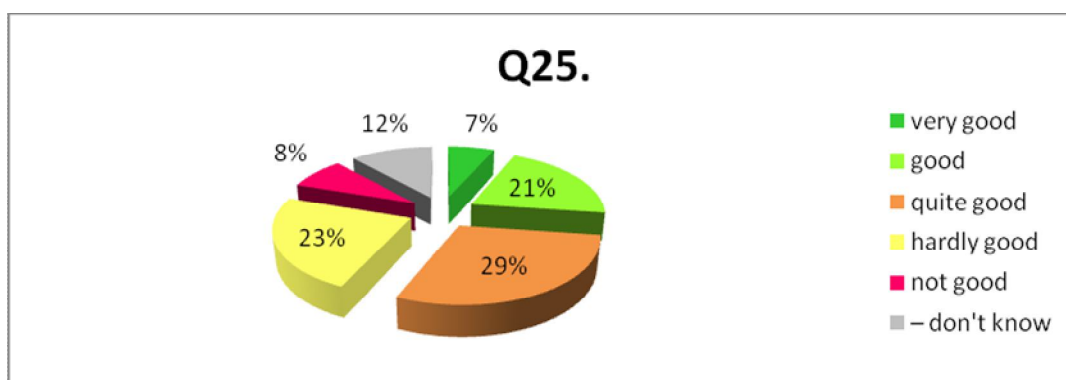
3.6.1 National institutions and resources for community forestry

Overall, more survey respondents gave national institutions' support for community forestry, including resources, a slightly unfavourable rating. This suggests a strong need in most countries for more support to the national institutions that support community forestry. Of course, community forestry is not the mainstream forestry policy in most governments and is influenced in many directions.

Question 25 on rating the effectiveness of national institutions and resources on community forestry

25. Please rate the effectiveness of national institutions and resources on community forestry in your country								
	Very good	Good	Quite good	Hardly good	Not good	Don't know	Rating average	Total responses
	6.6% (9)	20.6% (28)	29.4% (40)	23.5% (32)	8.1% (11)	11.8% (16)	2.59	136
Answered question								136
Skipped question								54

Note: (Number of respondents)



3.6.2 Strength of national institutions

To gauge whether government support in community forestry had improved since the beginning of the strategic phase in 2008, the survey asked if respondents considered national institutions were stronger. This

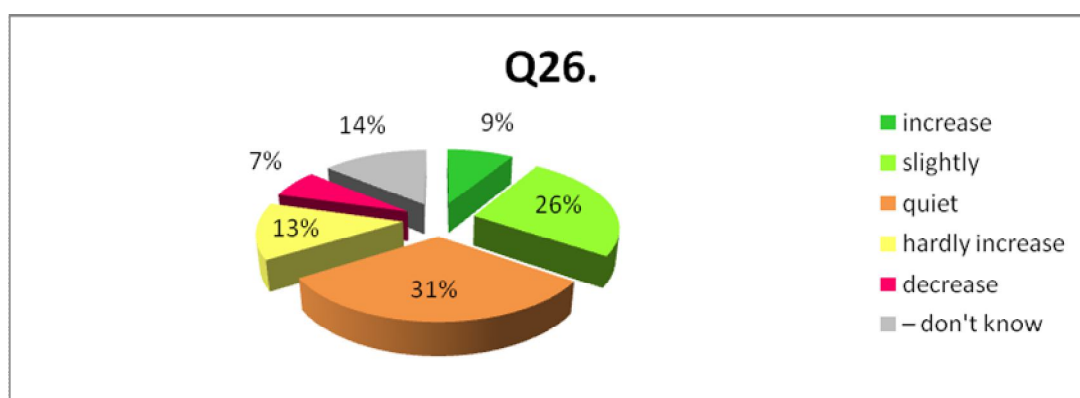
can show a trend if community forestry is promoted more than before or declining, although the responses need to be analysed in relation with the next questions on whether RECOFTC support is better perceived than government support or considered similar.

The survey responses were mixed on whether the national institutions were growing stronger, with a slight strengthening observed over the past three to four years, from 27.5 percent favourable to 34.5 percent favourable.

Question 26 on whether national institutions working on community forestry have become stronger in the past four years

26. Have these national institutions become stronger in the past 3–4 years?								
	Increased in strength	Slightly stronger	About the same	Hardly increased	Decreased	Don't know	Rating average	Total responses
	8.8% (12)	25.7% (35)	31.6% (43)	13.2% (18)	6.6% (9)	14.0% (19)	2.75	136
Answered question								136
Skipped question								54

Note: (Number of respondents)



3.7 Effectiveness of RECOFTC's support

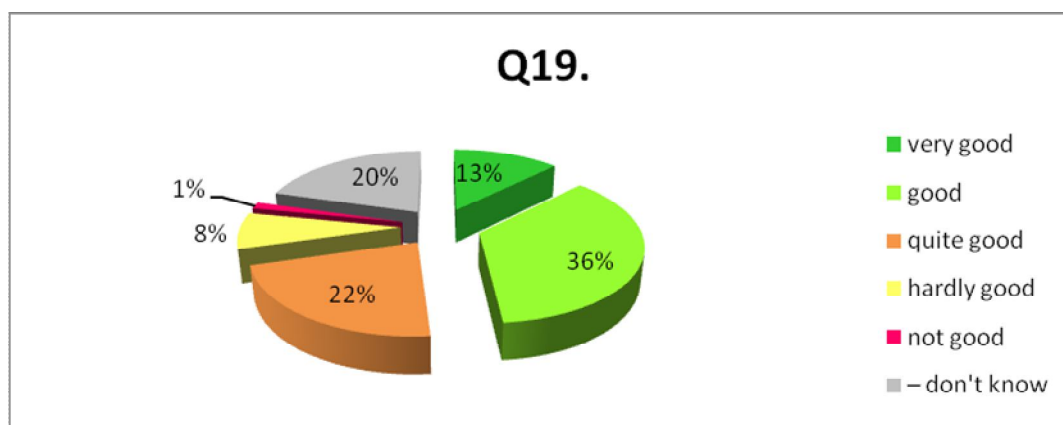
3.7.1 Capacity-building events

Given the need to strengthen policy, institutional support and resourcing for community forestry across the region, according to the responses to the previous questions, it is notable that RECOFTC's contributions to addressing some of the shortcomings was perceived positively by respondents, particularly in terms of capacity building, with a 70.4 percent positive rating.

Question 19 on quality of RECOFTC capacity-building events

19. Please rate the quality of support and professional advice of stakeholders who attended any RECOFTC capacity-building event								
	Very good	Good	Quite good	Hardly good	Not good	Don't know	Rating average	Total responses
	12.7% (18)	35.9% (51)	21.8% (31)	7.7% (11)	1.4% (2)	20.4% (29)	2.89	142
Answered question								142
Skipped question								48

Note: (Number of respondents)



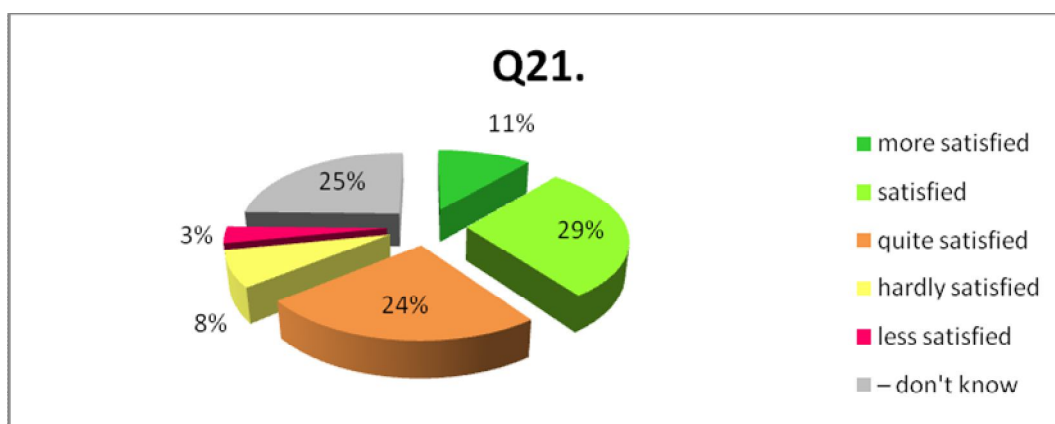
3.7.2 Beneficiary satisfaction with RECOFTC-trained government and NGO staff

Similarly, 64.1 percent of the survey respondents were positive about the level of satisfaction among beneficiaries who received assistance from RECOFTC-trained staff compared with staff not trained by RECOFTC.

Question 21 on beneficiary satisfaction with RECOFTC training

21. Do you see a higher level of satisfaction from beneficiaries after receiving support from RECOFTC trained government or NGO staff?								
	More satisfied	Satisfied	Quite satisfied	Hardly satisfied	Less satisfied	Don't know	Rating average	Total responses
	11.3% (16)	28.9% (41)	23.9% (34)	7.7% (11)	3.5% (5)	24.6% (35)	2.63	142
Answered question								142
Skipped question								48

Note: (Number of respondents)



3.7.3 Role of RECOFTC in strengthening institutions

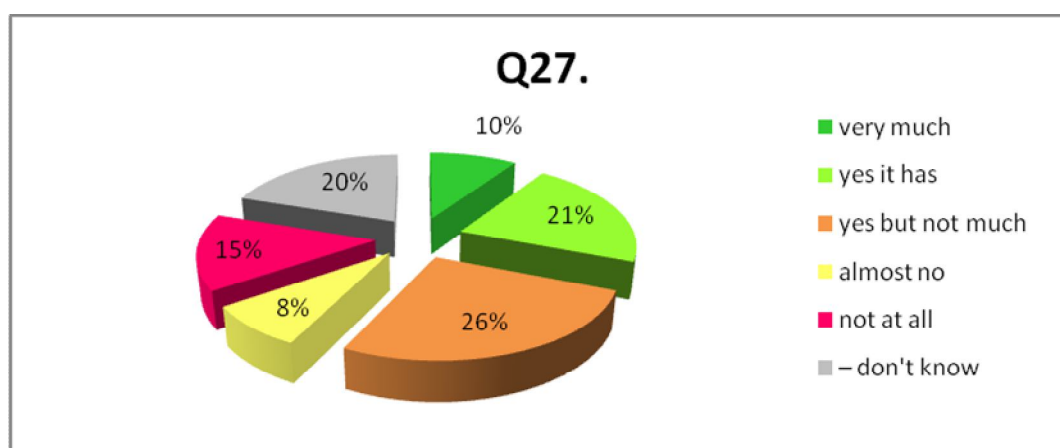
Slightly more than half (51.1 percent) of the survey respondents did not think that RECOFTC had much of a significant role in strengthening the relevant institutions in their country.

The ratings for questions 19, 21 and 27 were affirmed through the interviews. Based on the repetition of similar responses, there appears to be a need for RECOFTC to place more emphasis on working with and strengthening relevant institutions in countries.

Question 27 on whether RECOFTC helped strengthen relevant institutions

27. Do you think that RECOFTC has played a role in strengthening relevant institutions in your country?								
	Very much	Yes it has	Yes but not much	Almost none	Not at all	Don't know	Rating average	Total responses
	9.6% (13)	21.3% (29)	26.5% (36)	8.1% (11)	14.7% (20)	19.9% (27)	2.43	136
Answered question								136
Skipped question								54

Note: (Number of respondents)



3.8 Influence and improved practices due to RECOFTC

3.8.1 Influence on policy-making and legislative processes

There is a distinct difference between where the respondents perceive RECOFTC as having influence and not having influence. The survey respondents scored its ability to influence policy-making more negatively, at 38.9 percent of responses, than positively, at 33.3 percent of responses. Far more respondents thought the organization had less influence on the legislative process, at 33.3 percent of respondents who scored it negatively, compared with 22.3 percent who gave it a positive rating.

But in terms of RECOFTC having influence on people's rights in forest areas, 47.2 percent of respondents scored it positively, while only 20.8 percent of the survey respondents rated it negatively. A similar pattern emerged in the ratings on RECOFTC's influence on issues of forest governance, at 38.9 percent of the survey respondents seeing it favourably, while only 22.2 percent scored it negatively. The same was true for RECOFTC's influence on issues related to the sharing of benefits for local people, with 46.5 percent of the survey respondents seeing it favourably, while only 25.7 percent of respondents saw little influence.

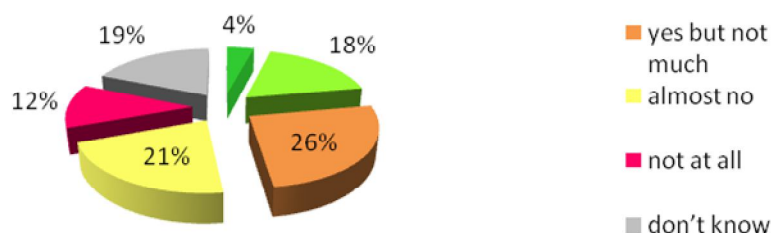
Based on the survey findings, RECOFTC is perceived as having significant influence on issues related to forest governance and the rights of local people and their sharing the benefits from the forest. Yet, RECOFTC is not seen as having much influence on government policy-making and legislative processes. These ratings were reflected in many of the interview conversations; although in Cambodia and Viet Nam, several interviewees reported that RECOFTC is influencing government policy and legislation. Given that RECOFTC is supporting local ownership, it would be somewhat counterproductive for the organization to take much credit for influencing policy. But some RECOFTC interviewees pointed out that RECOFTC staff work quietly behind the scenes and do ultimately influence policy.

Question 17 on RECOFTC influence on policy-making or legislation

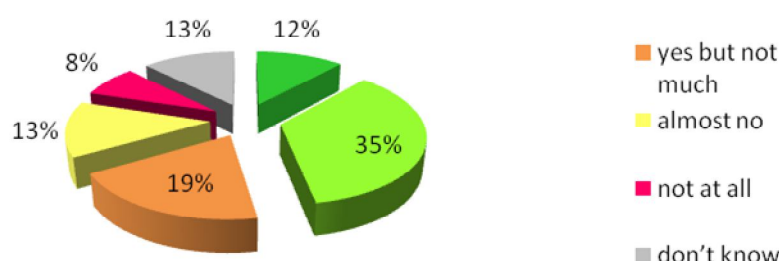
17. Do you think RECOFTC has influence on policy-making and legislative processes in your country?								
	Very much	Yes it has	Yes but not much	Almost none	Not at all	Don't know	Rating average	Total responses
RECOFTC has influence on policy-making	6.9% (10)	26.4% (38)	24.3% (35)	14.6% (21)	11.1% (16)	16.7% (24)	2.53	144
RECOFTC has influence on legislative processes	4.2% (6)	18.1% (26)	25.7% (37)	21.5% (31)	11.8% (17)	18.8% (27)	2.25	144
RECOFTC has influence on issues of rights of local people in forest areas	11.8% (17)	35.4% (51)	19.4% (28)	13.2% (19)	7.6% (11)	12.5% (18)	2.93	144
RECOFTC has influence on issues of forest governance	9.0% (13)	29.9% (43)	27.1% (39)	14.6% (21)	7.6% (11)	11.8% (17)	2.83	144
RECOFTC has influence on issues related to sharing of benefits for local people	9.7% (14)	36.8% (53)	16.7% (24)	16.7% (24)	9.0% (13)	11.1% (16)	2.88	144
Answered question								144
Skipped question								46

Note: (Number of respondents)

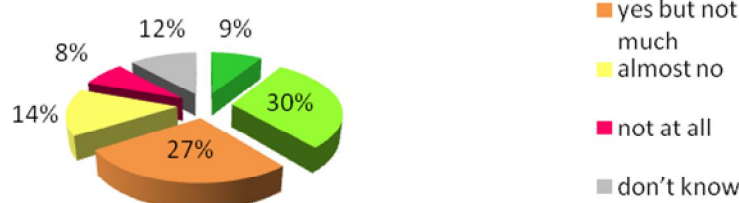
Q17. RECOFTC has influence on legislative processes



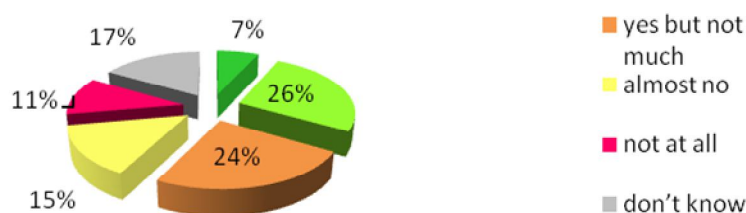
Q17. RECOFTC has influence on issues of rights of local people in forest areas

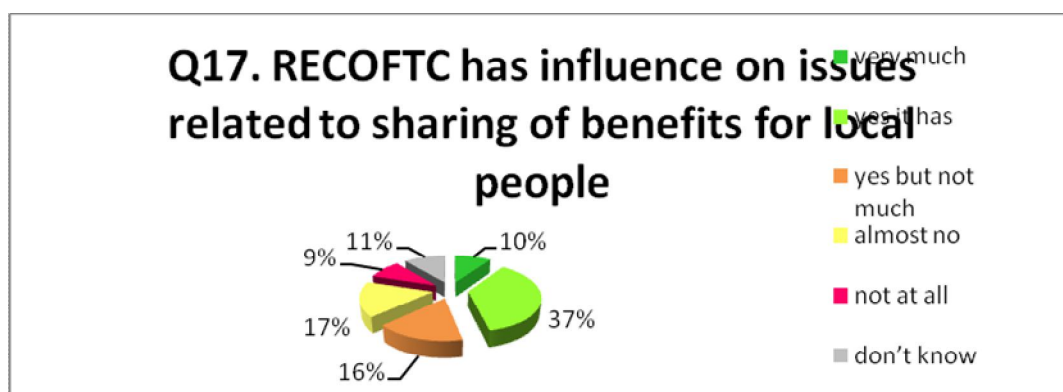


Q17. RECOFTC has influence on issues of forest governance



Q17. RECOFTC has influence on policy-making





3.8.2 Examples of improved community forestry practices introduced through RECOFTC activities



One of the clear conclusions from the survey and interviews is that a wide range of people believe that RECOFTC has been instrumental in creating change in community forestry; however, most could not recall any specific example. Of the few mentioned, almost all referred to contributions related to working with other stakeholders. Donors and the Board of Trustees like to see direct attribution, but this is not easy to isolate except in such locations as Cambodia where RECOFTC is involved in large projects that they lead and for which the results are more directly attributable to RECOFTC's initiatives. Indicative of the general perspective, one survey respondent admitted: "I don't know exactly what and which practices were improved by specific RECOFTC activities." But the respondent went on to say (echoing many comments) that there really is improvement and believes it is due to the cumulative effect of many interventions by RECOFTC in training and capacity building, piloting and demonstrating (often through 'action research') new ways of doing things and as a result of influence from use of analytical products, learning from RECOFTC communications and advocacy work with governments.

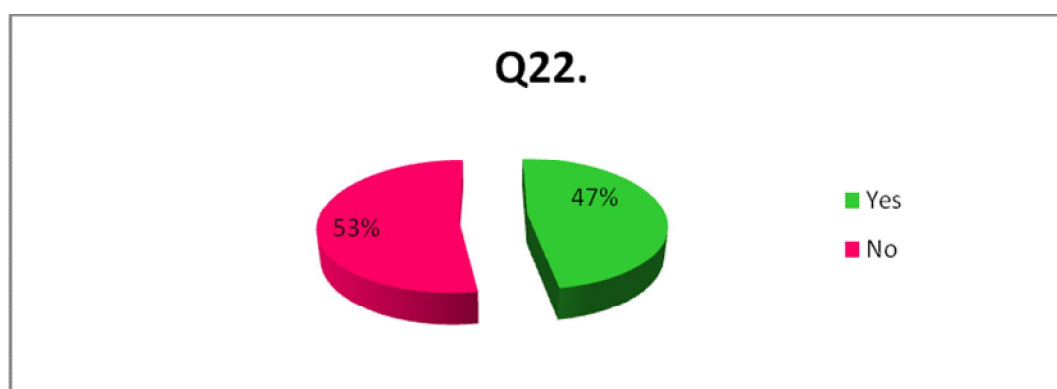
Despite the limited recall of specific examples, some general examples were mentioned. "I've been working with experts from RECOFTC who introduced sustainable forest management at the community level to our project in Yunnan Province, and the practices in several villages were good. And training courses, seminars and workshops helped a lot of Chinese researchers to know about community forestry," remarked one survey respondent/interviewee.

"I know community forestry practices in Bantaeng (South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia) are supported by RECOFTC and they have good progress. They received a permit from the government (Ministry of Forestry) to manage the state forest as *hutan desa* (village forest)," explained another survey respondent/interviewee.

Another survey respondent/interviewee said that leadership and the management style in community forestry has improved and become more democratic as a result of leaders receiving RECOFTC training. And according to another survey respondent/interviewee, community forest management at the village level had improved due to the application of techniques, methodologies, books and other materials introduced by RECOFTC.

Question 22 on improved practices in community forestry that RECOFTC introduced

22. Do you know any improved practices in community forestry that have been introduced through RECOFTC activities?			
		Response %	Responses
Yes		47.4%	65
No		52.6%	72
Can you please explain?			63
Answered question			137
Skipped question			53



3.8.3 Examples of RECOFTC practices continued or scaled up

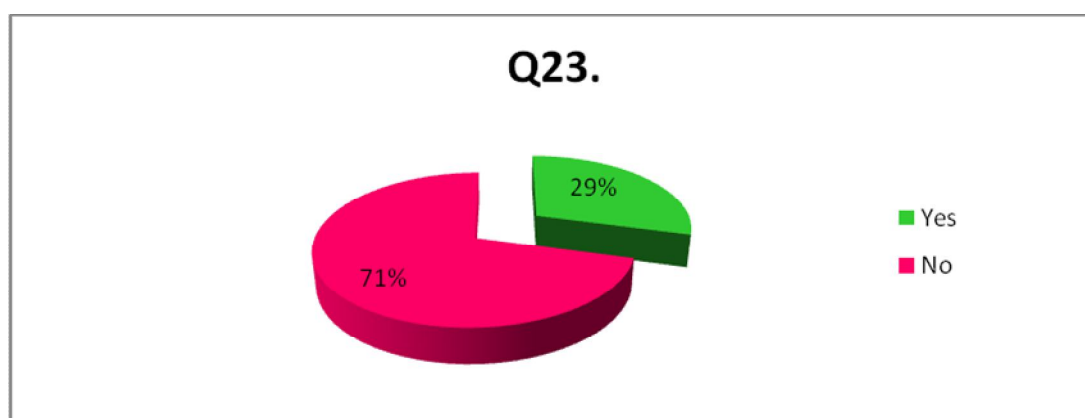
Overall, 70.8 percent of the survey respondents did not know of any examples of RECOFTC practices that had been scaled up. Several respondents (especially among those interviewed) have the perception that RECOFTC-supported initiatives have been scaled up, but only a few people could cite an example. One specific example given was the Biodiversity Corridors Initiative in the Tenasserin pilot site in Myanmar in 2010, which was built by RECOFTC; a few respondents mentioned it as a good example.

One example cited of how RECOFTC interventions can lead to the scaling up of regional initiatives was the ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN) Secretariat. Its collaboration with RECOFTC after a 2007 roundtable discussion in the Philippines resulted in the development of the ASFN website. Over time, this has led to further developments and increased funding from ASEAN, to the point where in 2011 the ASFN Secretariat and partners, including RECOFTC received a total of \$4 million until 2014 to move their initiatives forward.

Other examples highlighted include the Lao People's Democratic Republic, where RECOFTC staff worked closely with local people on a community forest project, and in northern Thailand, where work took place in the Pangyan community. Most of the other examples mentioned featured communities applying techniques that they had learned from RECOFTC capacity-building training courses. For example, a few respondents mentioned that their organizations implemented sustainable forest management projects with technical support from RECOFTC and applied in one village and then expanded to other villages, with similar levels of success.

Question 23 on whether RECOFTC practices were scaled up or continued after projects ended

23. Do you know of any cases where these practices have been continued or scaled up after the direct intervention (project) was finished?			
		Response %	Responses
Yes	<div><div></div></div>	29.2%	40
No	<div><div></div></div>	70.8%	97
Other (please specify)			38
Answered question			137
Skipped question			53



3.8.4 Examples of RECOFTC interventions that were mainstreamed

A large portion (70 percent) of the survey respondents could not think of any examples of RECOFTC interventions that were integrated into a government programme. Of the examples provided, REDD+ was highlighted as a reflection of how RECOFTC's advocacy for greater community rights, better governance and a fairer share of benefits for people led to its scaling up – RECOFTC contributed to the policy shift, according to respondents from Cambodia, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam and thus to the mainstreaming of REDD+. Other examples included RECOFTC influencing government forestry policy in Viet Nam and the Government in Nepal amending its forestry rules.

As well and one example repeated by a few interviewees, particularly in Cambodia, was the impact of RECOFTC on policy and legislation for the development of Community Forestry Management Plans. From practical demonstrations of the inefficiencies of government requirements, RECOFTC developed recommendations to simplify the management plans process; RECOFTC revised the community forestry guidelines pertaining to the management plans development for application in different situations. RECOFTC was also credited with recommending "simplification" (no explanation provided), including zoning, [community forestry] resources assessment, forest and non-timber forest product inventory, measuring methods and tools, a tree volume formula, forest inventory data analyses and presentation, the community forestry management plan format for 15-year, 5-year and annual planning horizons.



Regarding an example from Viet Nam, one survey respondent noted that local authorities in Phong Dien district, Thua Thien Hue Province, "integrate RECOFTC activities into the forest allocation programme to issue forest formal rights to farmers in Pho Trach village." Also in Viet Nam, another interviewee mentioned that skills and methods provided by RECOFTC in participatory forest

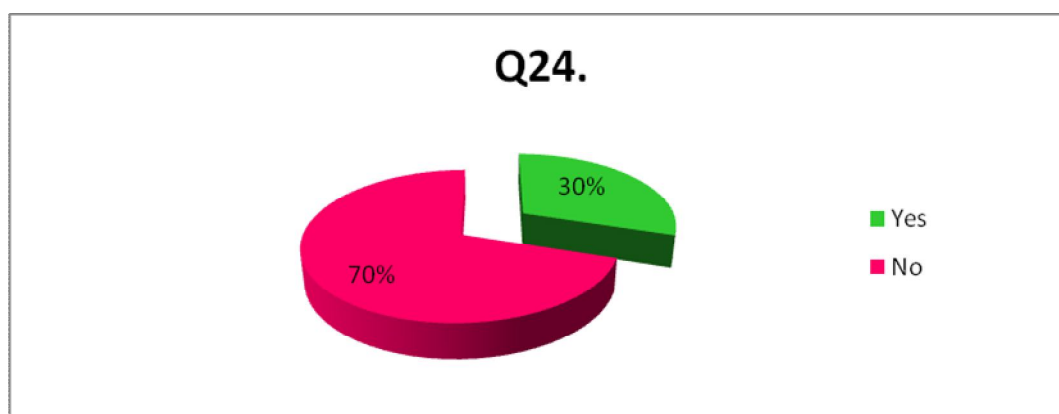
management planning and conflict resolution had been applied in courses offered by Tay Nguyen University.

Another example cited was the Forest Governance Learning Group, facilitated by RECOFTC, which brought together experts from the region for regular, systematic exchanges on relevant issues and developments. RECOFTC is also noted for facilitating a Learning Group for the ASEAN–Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change, funded by the Swiss Government through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Several examples were mentioned in which local forest departments were scaling up demonstration sites of community-based sustainable forest management. From the interviews, in particular, it is evident that much of RECOFTC's influence is informal through its relationships. Many respondents who perceived that practices are being mainstreamed were short on evidence to attribute particular practices to RECOFTC interventions (which does not mean it wasn't happening).

Question 24 on examples of RECOFTC interventions adopted by government or donor programmes

24. Can you give examples in which RECOFTC interventions were included in government policies or integrated into other government or donor programmes?			
		Response %	Responses
Yes		29.9%	41
No		70.1%	96
Other (please specify)			50
Answered question			137
Skipped question			53



3.9 Most significant change due to RECOFTC presence

A total of 64 people made a variety of comments at the end of the survey, as did several of the interviewees at the end of their interview. This final section summarizes the issues they stressed.

A major point made by many respondents was the importance of RECOFTC in strengthening the capacity of national institutions to support the development of community forestry in their countries. Many countries were mentioned, at least in terms of the observable change in the government. For example, with an open-door policy towards decentralization and poverty alleviation targets, community forestry will have a better role in Myanmar in the future, according to one

respondent. A respondent from Indonesia made a similar comment: "I believe community forestry is a solution to forest problems in Indonesia as well as in the Asia region. RECOFTC has a strategic role to play in each country."

More students need to access RECOFTC's training opportunities. As one interviewee noted, "Those who are well trained in community forestry can get jobs in their home countries."

Another theme highlighted was expansion of RECOFTC's role. Some thought it should encompass more focus on technology transfer and grass-roots training, especially for women and youth, through strengthened cooperation with a range of civil society organizations. Some said that RECOFTC should expand its level of influence by offering technical consultations to United Nations agencies and international stakeholders elsewhere in the world. Several people who were interviewed mentioned that more emphasis should be placed on linking with and influencing the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and its members to move forward on community forestry.

One respondent from Africa commented: "RECOFTC has trained quite a number of participants from Kenya who have direct influence in the introduction of participatory forest management, which is similar to community forestry. My institution has also adopted the training programme of RECOFTC and currently with funding from JICA has been offering short courses related to community/social forestry and natural resource management for participants from East, Central and Southern Africa for the last 15 years and there is room for more collaboration." Several respondents from outside Asia made similar observations, and this is an excellent example of how RECOFTC is influencing people around the world.

For example, acknowledged another survey respondent, "I think RECOFTC plays [a] very important role in the field of international community forestry. Through learning and reading publications and e-journals, I gained information about forefront theory and [the] practice of international community forestry. I think RECOFTC is doing a very good job in this field. I hope RECOFTC strengthens its cooperation with local universities and research institutions in a variety of countries."

Finally, several comments focused on the need for RECOFTC to lead on developing a fully comprehensive integrated approach to community-based forest management. As the respondents noted, this will require continuous research, budget support and time, but it is essential to the beneficiaries of community forestry in Asia and worldwide. One participant summed it up by saying that "in the past few years, RECOFTC has shown many good signs that it is a force at all levels – international, regional and local. What we need is much more of the same – active in knowledge management, promoting public participation and proposing entry points on climate change and gender issues and advocating community forestry at all levels".

4. Conclusions

These conclusions build from the findings presented in section 3 and are based on a triangulation of that data. Thus the observations represent the views of the respondents from the targeted stakeholder list and the open invitation generated through the online survey, interviews with survey respondents and targeted stakeholders and documentation provided by RECOFTC and donors.

1. Rating the performance of RECOFTC on eight criteria

Overall, respondents perceive that RECOFTC is very relevant; on average, the respondents rated RECOFTC's performance on each of the eight criteria (effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, accessibility, adequacy, responsiveness and reliability) as good or better.

2. Medium- and long-term impacts of RECOFTC's interventions

Even though RECOFTC was acknowledged as contributing to the medium- and long-term impacts on community forestry in Asia, few respondents or documentation included examples of such impact that could be directly attributed to RECOFTC.

3. Effectiveness addressing gender issues in programmes

Although many respondents do not fully understand gender mainstreaming or that there men and women experience similar events differently, RECOFTC is perceived as placing increasing emphasis on integrating gender dimensions into all of its programming.

4. Relevance of RECOFTC's rights-based approach

Although many respondents see RECOFTC's relevance, many do not fully understand the rights-based approach, which needs to be described more fully in RECOFTC's documents and programmes.

5. Rating of services on four criteria

RECOFTC's capacity-building services, analytical services and communication all scored particularly highly in terms of relevance. Those services scored as good overall in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and impact (with impact ranking the lowest).

6. RECOFTC's organizational strengths and challenges

The respondents considered RECOFTC's excellent reputation in community forestry development and management as its major strength, an observation voiced by most interviewees. The major challenges are how wide the mandate should be, how to balance core funding with project funding and how far RECOFTC should go in terms of becoming the leader linking community forestry initiatives in Asia. Another challenge mentioned by several respondents was that RECOFTC should develop and share a fully comprehensive integrated approach to community-based forestry management.

7. Quality of support and professional advice in community forestry and satisfaction with government services

Although government services were acknowledged as providing quality support and professional advice, many respondents indicated that they are not reaching the local community people who need it for the most part. A large number of respondents were not satisfied with the level of government services in community forestry.

8. Effectiveness of national institutions

The respondents acknowledged improvement in national institutions in the past few years but largely regard them as needing to be much more effective.

9. Effectiveness of RECOFTC's support through capacity building to beneficiaries and institutions

RECOFTC is perceived as more effective in its capacity building of people than it is in strengthening relevant institutions in countries where its activities are having relatively small effect. Where RECOFTC is working on national programmes and projects that include government staff, there are perceived capacity-building benefits for beneficiaries and institutions.

10. Improved practices that were scaled up or mainstreamed due to RECOFTC's influence

RECOFTC appears to have considerable influence on the rights of local people, issues of forest governance and on sharing benefits for local people. But it has less influence on policy and little on legislative processes. A large majority of the respondents did not think that RECOFTC interventions had been sufficiently scaled up or mainstreamed.

4.1 Summary of outcome indicators covered by survey

Regarding the four outcomes that were covered by the survey and interviews (Outcome 3 was excluded), the following conclusions can be made about RECOFTC:

Outcome 1 – Policy and legislative processes – Moderately successful, with some examples.

Outcome 2 – Capacity building – Very successful, as perceived by almost all stakeholders, in the delivery of both products and services.

Outcome 4 – Piloting, demonstrating and practising community forestry – Very successful where it is taking place but needs to be expanded and scaled up.

Outcome 5 – National community forestry programmes – Minimally successful and will require a great deal of effort to have real impact.

5. Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the responses to the survey and in the interviews.

1. Service delivery

RECOFTC should continue to carry out a combination of functional approaches, as it has been doing; its approaches are well regarded and contribute to achieving the overall objectives of RECOFTC.

2. Piloting, demonstrating and practising community forestry

RECOFTC needs to replicate the successful piloting, demonstrating and practising of community forestry programmes in more countries and more locations within countries to maximize the benefits from limited resources.

3. National institutions

RECOFTC needs to place increased effort on supporting national institutions in most countries to assist them towards improving their ability to deliver community forestry services to people.

4. Integrated country programmes

In its next Strategic Plan, RECOFTC needs to focus on developing country programmes that link the piloting, demonstrating and practising of community forestry with the need to strengthen national institutions and the services provided by RECOFTC at headquarters and in countries.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

More effort needs to be placed on the challenging area of collecting performance stories that demonstrate the real value of RECOFTC to people.

5.1 Lessons learned from conducting the stakeholder survey

1. The survey approach, introduction and questions were successful in eliciting responses from the targeted stakeholders and also attracted a substantial number of respondents from the Internet (open invitation).

2. The mixture of quantitative questions and questions requiring qualitative answers worked well and should be used again in the future to ensure maximum input.

3. Because this survey was only distributed in English, future surveys should be translated into local languages to increase input from community members, especially as RECOFTC country programmes expand.



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