

UN-REDD
PROGRAMME

**LESSONS
LEARNED**



**ASIA -
PACIFIC**



UN-REDD LESSONS LEARNED: ASIA-PACIFIC

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UN-REDD PROGRAMME

The UN-REDD Programme is the United Nations collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) in developing countries. The Programme was launched in 2008 and builds on the convening role and technical expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The UN-REDD Programme supports nationally-led REDD+ processes and promotes the informed and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities, in national and international REDD+ implementation.



ACRONYMS

- BDS: Benefit Distribution System
- CCT: Conditional Cash Transfer
- CSO: Civil Society Organization
- FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- FCPF: Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
- FPIC: Free, Prior and Informed Consent
- GIZ: German Agency for International Cooperation
- IPCC: Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change
- JICA: Japanese International Cooperation Agency
- MRV: Measurement, Reporting and Verification
- NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
- NFI: National Forest Inventory
- PM: Participatory Monitoring
- REDD+: Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries
- RECOFTC: The Center for People and Forests
- R-PP: Readiness Preparation Proposal
- SNV: Netherlands Development Organisation
- SPC: Secretariat of the Pacific Community Climate Change
- UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
- UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme
- UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
- UN-REDD: The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in developing countries
- WCMC: World Conservation Monitoring Centre
- WCS: Wildlife Conservation Society



INTRODUCTION

The UN-REDD Programme is currently supporting REDD+ readiness in 12 countries in Asia-Pacific. In six of these countries, namely Cambodia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea (PNG), the Philippines, Solomon Islands and Viet Nam, National UN-REDD Programmes are being implemented, while support to the other countries is delivered through the UN-REDD Global Programme.

The UN-REDD Programme, in line with the decisions on REDD+ adopted by the UNFCCC¹, supports the development of the basic components that make up a REDD+ system (see Figure 1).

In the Asia-Pacific region, UN-REDD Programme partner countries have generated numerous lessons that may be relevant for REDD+ readiness and implementation in other countries. While REDD+ requires the development of various elements, such as Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems, a Benefit Distribution System (BDS), and an effective system of safeguards, all captured by the National REDD+ Strategy, most policies and measures required for REDD+ are not substantively different from those developed over many years in the context of sustainable forest management. The lessons in this booklet are grouped according to those elements of the REDD+ framework that are specific to REDD+. More lessons have been learned in other areas, as significantly more work has been implemented over the last two years.

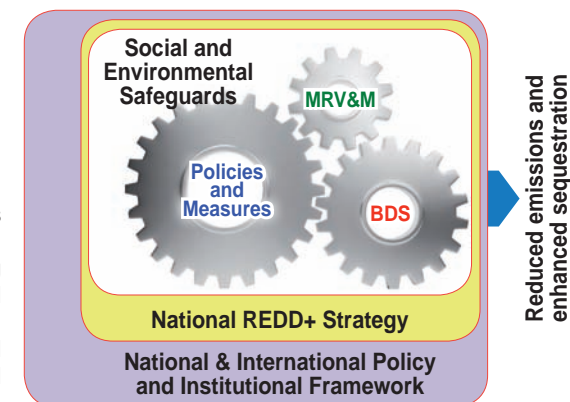
UN-REDD Programme partner countries in Asia-Pacific*:

- Bangladesh 
- Bhutan 
- Cambodia 
- Indonesia 
- Mongolia 
- Nepal 
- Pakistan 
- Papua New Guinea 
- Philippines 
- Solomon Islands 
- Sri Lanka 
- Viet Nam 

*as of October 2011

Figure 1: A conceptual REDD+ system

This REDD+ system consists of three inter-locking cogs, namely policies and measures, which are formulated and implemented, the impacts of which are assessed through the MRV and Monitoring systems, which measure and report on performance; and which generate benefits in the form of REDD+ revenues, which are distributed through the Benefit Distribution System (BDS). Underlying this three-cog system are the environmental and social safeguards, as defined in Annex 1 of the Cancun Agreement. All of this is captured by the National REDD+ Strategy, which needs to be rooted in national and international policy frameworks.



¹ UNFCCC Decisions 1/CP.13, 4/CP.15 and 1/CP. 16

INFORMATION, MONITORING AND MRV



As per the agreed definition under the UNFCCC, REDD+ goes beyond deforestation and forest degradation, and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries. One of the many challenges in the successful implementation of REDD+ includes the need to take a broader-than-carbon approach to monitoring.

Building on Indonesia's Existing NFI System

Context:

Indonesia has had a National Forest Inventory (NFI) system in place since the early 1990s, but REDD+ is now putting new requirements on the NFI, for example the need for obtaining data on carbon in the five forest carbon pools (above ground, below ground, litter, dead wood and soil organic carbon). In order to generate this data, the NFI is currently being modified.

Challenges and Best Practices:

1. The existing NFI is a good starting point, as it facilitates the process of collecting the necessary carbon data.
2. The NFI has to be capable of collecting data necessary for REDD+ in a cost-effective way and it is necessary to find the right balance between the number of parameters to be measured, time available for measurements and a cost-effective implementation of the new design.
3. The current effort by the UN-REDD Programme in Indonesia aims to achieve significant improvements through small changes, taking into account the financial and human resources in the Ministry of Forestry.

4. The UN-REDD Programme tries to emphasize the usefulness of the improvements not only in light of REDD+ but also in fulfilling the existing goals of the NFI. In this way, all improvements benefit not only REDD+ but also the implementation of other national forest policies.

Looking Ahead:

Some analysis and field testing is still needed before a final recommendation can be made. Consultations with specialists from the Ministry of Forestry and other organizations need to be held to agree on a design that meets the criteria of REDD+ and can be implemented in the field after getting clearance from the Ministry of Forestry.



Participatory Monitoring

Context:

Under Phase 2 and Phase 3 of REDD+, developing countries will need to generate evidence of "results-based actions" to receive benefits for the reduction of carbon emissions or enhanced removals of carbon. The national monitoring and MRV systems hold the key for producing this evidence. In Viet Nam, stakeholders are engaging in discussions on collecting such data at two levels: through Participatory Monitoring (PM) and as part of the NFI and satellite-based land monitoring system.

PM data will be limited to basic forest measurements on forest area and properties (e.g. diameter at breast height and tree species). Data collected will amount to a very large number of samples. This will supplement the NFI and satellite-based land monitoring data to estimate biomass per management unit and eco-zone.

Challenges and Best Practices:

1. Changes in carbon stocks in managed forests over a typical accounting period will likely be too small to be detected accurately through remote sensing.
2. The NFI will collect accurate data, but with insufficient resolution in space and time to properly capture local changes in biomass. Changes will need to be measured on the ground to improve accuracy.
3. Mobilizing local people can be more cost-effective compared to the use of professional surveyors in conducting basic measurements during ground-based surveys.



4. Communities' understanding of carbon monitoring is expected to work as an incentive to promote further improvements in forest management. Engaging local people in PM will also increase the ownership felt by communities of national REDD+ programmes and their engagement in the design of the programmes, thus increasing the likelihood that carbon payments will be efficiently distributed down to the local level.

Looking Ahead:

Based on the experience gained during the pilot exercise, a PM manual is being developed for training facilitators and local technical staff on technical aspects of PM in Viet Nam. PM will be implemented throughout the Lam Ha and Di Linh districts in Viet Nam's Lam Dong Province.

BENEFIT DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Context:

Most work on benefit distribution has been undertaken in Viet Nam. Here, the UN-REDD Programme organized a series of studies and local consultations to examine the issues that need to be addressed in designing a REDD+-compliant Benefit Distribution System (BDS). A total of 17 policy issues have been identified that need to be addressed in order to establish such a system.

Challenges and Best Practices :

1. REDD+ revenues need to be managed in a way that conforms to the principles of good governance and equity. This could involve management by parallel systems to the government budget, for example through a REDD+ fund with participatory decision making. All major stakeholder groups, including the ultimate beneficiaries, need to be engaged in designing the way in which REDD+ revenues are distributed.
2. Regular independent, external audits of national REDD+ revenues (and any revenues

managed at sub-national levels) are essential. The principles of transparency and accountability require such an approach.

3. Conditional cash transfers (CCT) need to link payments to performance. In order to ensure continued stakeholder support and engagement, evidence of future payment to reward performance needs to be apparent. CCTs have achieved such a result in other sectors such as education and health and could be adapted for use in REDD+.
4. Performance regarding benefits beyond carbon can be incorporated into benefit structuring. The use of weightings (termed "R-coefficients") can capture multiple benefits, such as biodiversity conservation, or poverty alleviation and address gender and Indigenous Peoples issues. For example, overall payments for performance in reducing emissions may be weighted higher for areas with high biodiversity, high poverty rates, having a high proportion of ethnic minority households or households headed by women.

Looking Ahead:

Under the UN-REDD Programme's support for REDD+ Phase 2 in Viet Nam, the country will distribute results-based payments through a BDS designed to take account of these challenges and best practices. Further lessons will be learned in the process and incorporated into a national-level BDS that will allow Viet Nam to move into Phase 3 (full national implementation) of REDD+.



CASE STUDIES

The following case studies describe experiences with two very different types of REDD+ processes. In the Pacific, a large number of very small countries face unique challenges in preparing for REDD+, while Mongolia stands as one of the very few REDD+-eligible countries with mainly boreal forests.

REDD+ in Pacific Island Countries

Context:

Many Pacific Island countries have weak technical and institutional capacities and limited access to resources to engage in REDD+ in a cost-effective manner on a country-by-country basis. Therefore, the international community may wish to recognize and consider their unique challenges and provide specific guidance for REDD+ implementation in the region. Through initial opportunity assessment and awareness-raising efforts and the initiation of National UN-REDD Programmes in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, a number of lessons have already emerged.

Challenges and Best Practices:

The cost of REDD+ Readiness would far exceed potential REDD+ benefits for most countries. In many countries, it would not be financially possible to formulate appropriate policies and cost-effective measures and develop mechanisms for MRV and benefit distribution. A regional approach is needed in order to address this challenge.

The UN-REDD Programme, in partnership with regional and bilateral partners such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the Japanese International Cooperation



Agency (JICA), promotes a regional MRV approach and intends to collaborate with the Applied Geoscience and Technology Division of SPC to pursue this outcome. This would also allow smaller countries to benefit from actions such as updated geographic information and data management systems, strengthened capacities and access to regional, multi-stakeholder networks on forests and climate change.

Looking Ahead:

The UN-REDD Programme will continue to support the sub-region through sharing lessons and knowledge from its National Programmes in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. The Programme will collaborate closely with key development partners to promote a jointly agreed upon approach towards REDD+ readiness. Meanwhile, the Programme will seek to actively engage with the private sector to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.



REDD+ in Mongolia

Context:

Some developing countries with temperate and boreal forests have been slow to take advantage of the potential opportunity provided by REDD+. By contrast, Mongolia, with approximately 11 million hectares of boreal forest, is a good example of a country that has acted quickly. Boreal forests can store an equal or even larger amount of carbon in soil and vegetation compared to tropical forests, and therefore, considerable CO₂ abatement potential can be expected. As a non-tropical country, Mongolia's participation in the UN-REDD Programme is unique, and lessons from the country's current roadmap development process should provide useful lessons to countries with similar forest types and ecological conditions.

Challenges and Best Practices:

Despite the critical importance of fuelwood and timber, Mongolia's limited national policy and economic focus on its forestry sector combined with a general lack of knowledge and awareness of REDD+ may continue to undermine the sector's potential for contributing to sustainable economic development. As part of the roadmap process, initial stakeholder discussions and awareness-raising events have helped policy makers and other key stakeholders visualize how Mongolia's REDD+ potential could be harnessed.

Given the current export ban on timber, demand for wood is domestic and dominated by fuelwood. Implementing appropriate policies and measures to sustainably manage and utilize its forest resources remains challenging. Yet, there are substantial opportunities for addressing illegal logging and enhancing forest

stocks. At the same time, additional efforts are required to promote energy-efficient heating and cooking systems at the household level, the development of more low-waste technologies for wood production, and more efficient use of timber in construction and other commercial activities.



Looking Ahead:

The recently initiated roadmap process in Mongolia will continue to raise awareness and promote stakeholder engagement to ensure broad participation in the process. At the same time, the process will consider Mongolia's unique circumstances while applying some of the lessons and knowledge from tropical countries.

SAFEGUARDS

The Cancun Agreements recognize a set of social and environmental safeguards for REDD+ and the UN-REDD Programme in Asia-Pacific has worked on both types. Below is one example of each: a pilot process to seek the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as a means of ensuring the full and effective participation of local rights-holders and respect for the knowledge and rights of Indigenous Peoples and members of local communities in Viet Nam; and the investigation of the multiple benefits of REDD+ in Cambodia and Indonesia.

FPIC

Context:

The joint FCPF and UN-REDD Programme paper entitled, "Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement in REDD+ Readiness with a Focus on the Participation of Indigenous Peoples and Other Forest-Dependent Communities", emphasizes respect for the right of FPIC for Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities in National UN-REDD Programmes. Although procedures for FPIC have been designed and implemented previously at the scale of a project (e.g. in the mining sector, or for an oil palm project in Indonesia), the scale of FPIC needed for REDD+ is much larger, and the procedures are more complex. The UN-REDD Programme has piloted an FPIC process for REDD+ in Viet Nam and is finalizing plans for a similar pilot in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia.

Challenges and Best Practices:

1. Adequate time needs to be allowed for awareness raising. A single awareness-raising event for local communities and Indigenous Peoples is insufficient. This is both because the issues surrounding climate change are quite complex and require repeated discussion to raise awareness, and because demands on villagers' time is such that not all can attend a single event. Thus a number of events need to be organized over a period of weeks or months. In addition, the

use of a variety of approaches and media can ensure that key messages and issues are better understood.

2. Local facilitators are essential for effective awareness raising and discussions. Communicating complex issues associated with REDD+ is even more difficult when speaking an individual's second language. Communication in stakeholders' first language (or a language commonly used by local people in conversing with each other) is essential, and this will normally necessitate the recruitment of local facilitators. However, the facilitators are unlikely to be well-educated on REDD+ issues initially, and so they also require intensive training.
3. FPIC for REDD+ is an on-going process, rather than a single event. Countries implementing REDD+ are guided by a National REDD+ Strategy. However, FPIC applies not to the strategy itself, but to the process by which REDD+ is actually implemented. In practice, this means that interventions to reduce emissions need to be integrated with normal socio-economic planning, and it is this planning process that needs to incorporate FPIC.

REDD+ can serve as a catalyst for greater participation by local people (not necessarily only Indigenous Peoples) in decision-



making, thus increasing transparency and strengthening democratic processes. While the costs of the FPIC pilot in Viet Nam were significant (about US\$115,000 for 80 villages), scaling this up to full REDD+ implementation does not mean that the costs will be exorbitant, both because of economies of scale and because FPIC will only be required in areas where REDD+ activities are proposed.

4. Documentation of FPIC processes and decisions can be challenging. Local people may fear submitting a written statement of their decision, especially if individuals' signatures are appended. Verbal transmission of a decision may be preferred, but leaves

open the possibility of future conflicts over the decision. A compromise, perhaps involving a written record of a verbal decision, may be needed.

Looking Ahead:

Lessons from the FPIC pilot exercise are being incorporated into a revised and improved process for Phase 2 of the UN-REDD Programme in Viet Nam. This process will also provide other stakeholders besides Indigenous Peoples and local communities with the opportunity to provide or withhold their consent. Implementation of FPIC processes in Phase 2 will generate further lessons to enable scaling-up to full national implementation in Phase 3.



Accounting for Multiple Benefits in REDD+ Planning and Implementation

Context:

To date, the main income from forest management in tropical forests is generated from timber production. A REDD+ mechanism may change this, but the fear is that policy makers might forget to think about the benefits that forests provide beyond carbon. The decisions made and approaches adopted for REDD+ activities will affect the type, extent and quality of multiple benefits that are delivered.

In Cambodia and Indonesia, the UN-REDD Programme is exploring ways that REDD+ can bring about benefits beyond reducing CO₂ emissions. Through careful planning and implementation, additional benefits from biodiversity and ecosystem services can be secured.

Challenges and Best Practices:

1. Identifying possible synergies and trade offs in the multiple benefits of REDD+ is often viewed as difficult and costly. However, the work of the UN-REDD Programme (through UNEP's World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and partners) in Cambodia and Indonesia has demonstrated that producing overlays of spatial information does not need to be costly.
2. The opportunity cost of reducing emissions varies depending on carbon density and alternative land-use options. Carbon alone may often not be sufficient to implement REDD+ activities in a particular area. However, potential income (not only monetary income, but also other values that cannot be easily monetized) from other benefits can make a difference, which is why there is a clear need for integrating them into decision making for REDD+.

3. The shortage of perfect and recent data should not constrain decision making. The situation in Cambodia and Indonesia does not differ from many other countries, in that some spatial data may not be of high quality, are outdated or do not exist at all. Yet, it has been observed that there is more information available than people usually expect, and that policy makers need to make decisions based on what is known now, rather than on speculation.

4. The result of spatial analysis is only one input into decision making. The results illustrate clearly where REDD+ activities and multiple benefits can go hand-in-hand and where they clash. In Cambodia, for example, 15 per cent of the land set aside for Economic Land Concessions (ELC)² overlaps with areas of high to medium carbon densities. However, it has also been observed that decision makers require more information to change existing plans or to make multiple benefits a more important element in planning.

Looking Ahead:

Due to market failures, many natural resources are treated as a free resource. This has led to deforestation and degraded ecosystem services. There is an urgent need to value multiple benefits properly to ensure that their value is taken into account when decisions are made. The UN-REDD Programme's work in Cambodia and Indonesia is tackling this particular issue. Valuation work is expected to provide the sort of information that is often having the greatest influence on decision making related to land use. In Indonesia, the UN-REDD Programme (through UNEP-WCMC) is developing a practical toolkit that supports the identification of locations for REDD+ activities and guides decision making that goes beyond carbon.

² Concessions granted to private companies for timber exploitation in Cambodia

NATIONAL REDD+ STRATEGY



All phases of REDD+, from initial readiness through to full implementation, need to be guided by a coherent and comprehensive strategy. The National UN-REDD Programmes in Asia-Pacific have experience in developing an initial REDD+ readiness “roadmap”, for example in Cambodia, and in developing a long-term National REDD+ Strategy, for example in Indonesia. Both are presented below.

REDD+ Readiness Roadmaps

Context:

Making progress towards REDD+ readiness involves activities on many issues, covering different disciplines. This can appear a daunting task, and without careful planning, progress can be ineffective and inefficient. The UN-REDD Programme supports a structured approach to REDD+ readiness, which can help to establish necessary partnerships with national governments and key stakeholders, including development partners.

Challenges and Best Practices:

1. The development of REDD+ readiness is primarily a political process. Although there are substantial technical aspects to REDD+, the decisions made almost always have a political dimension. For example, planning for MRV is mainly technical in nature. However, a MRV plan also involves political questions, such as who should be implementing MRV. It is important to recognize early in the process the political dimensions of any REDD+ readiness activity by supporting the integration of technical elements into political plans such as on the REDD+ readiness roadmap in Cambodia.
2. REDD+ readiness requires coordination across multiple government agencies, including forestry, environment and land management authorities, finance ministries and sub-national

government agencies – all of whom may have responsibility for some aspects of the process. In some countries, it may be necessary to establish a core group of decision makers, and then to bring in additional agencies as the implications of REDD+ become clearer. The REDD+ task force in Cambodia is an example of such a core group of decision makers.

3. REDD+ readiness requires extensive consultation among all stakeholders. Many stakeholders are very interested in REDD+, including government agencies, NGOs, civil society, private sector investors, Indigenous Peoples and development partners. The readiness process needs to establish both formal and informal mechanisms to ensure adequate consultations among all these stakeholders.
4. REDD+ readiness is more effective and efficient if harmonized with existing laws, policies and programmes, rather than designing new policies and institutions. In Cambodia, it has taken over 10 years to establish official recognition for community forests. Designing new policies for REDD+ might take a similar period of time, but REDD+ might be easily integrated into the existing community forestry policies. In the same way, it is preferable to support existing structures, rather than creating new ones and build technical understanding among all stakeholders on key issues before making decisions.

5. Developing an institutional map is critical. This involves comparing existing or planned activities of key stakeholders with REDD+ readiness priorities. This matrix can then be used to identify areas that are not currently receiving support, areas for further support and areas where coordination between actors might be useful in order to achieve more effective results.

Looking Ahead:

Since the early experiences with roadmap development, especially in Cambodia, the UN-REDD Programme has been moving forward to assist other countries with a similar process. Roadmap preparation is currently underway in Bangladesh and Mongolia. In those countries that are FCPF partners, the Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) template can be used, but in other countries the roadmap template can be adjusted to national needs.

National REDD+ Strategy Development in Indonesia

Context:

The Cancun Agreements request countries to promote and support several safeguards. One of them relates to the “full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, in particular, Indigenous Peoples and local communities...”. In the Asia-Pacific region, UN-REDD Programme partner countries responded very positively to this request. Today, very few actions are taken without consulting concerned stakeholders. While for some countries, this new approach to planning and implementation is still in its infancy, numerous lessons have been learned over the last several years in many countries.

Under its National UN-REDD Programme, Indonesia took a proactive approach and formulated a first REDD+ Strategy document during the second half of 2010. Foremost on the mind of the people producing the Strategy was to base its formulation on an inclusive process that allowed a wide range of stakeholders to provide their thoughts and input. The consultation process took several months during which several key lessons were learned.

Challenges and Best Practices:

1. A successful consultation process requires that all participants clearly understand the issues. Early awareness raising is an important prerequisite to balance the position of stakeholders, as well as to avoid dominance of one party during consultations. The Programme provided suitable information at an early stage to enhance stakeholders’ understanding of various aspects of REDD+ before constructive discussions were initiated.
2. Implementing an inclusive process takes time. The experiences clearly show that an inclusive process contributes greatly to the quality of the discussions as well as to the substance of the Strategy. It also provides a sense of ownership. Unfortunately, the time allocated for the process in Indonesia turned out to be too short and as a result, different stakeholder groups participated on an unequal footing.
3. A Strategy is only as good as the information it is based on. REDD+ is a climate change mitigation mechanism that requires – to the extent possible – accurate, relevant, up-to-date, complete and verifiable data. Use of such data enhances the credibility of the formulation process and the output.



The organizers of the consultation process supported the deliberations with relevant and recent data, although the data did not cover all parts of the country equally. It is clear that better data for all parts of the country, and data that corresponds with the local knowledge of many stakeholders, would have improved the process and outputs.

4. It is important to have a neutral facilitator of the process. Since UN agencies are viewed as neutral by many stakeholders, the support of the UN-REDD Programme can assist in removing barriers, enhance communication between stakeholders with opposing views and get people to think and work constructively. The National UN-REDD Programme in Indonesia was instrumental in assisting the Government and the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) to coordinate the work of the Strategy drafting team. In collaboration with partners, the Programme was able to bring together many stakeholders, especially Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities, as well as CSOs, NGOs and government representatives.

Looking Ahead:

The experiences gained in Indonesia, as well as Cambodia and Viet Nam, clearly indicate that inclusive stakeholder processes create a feeling of ownership and trust. In planning for similar processes in other partner countries, early awareness raising and the provision of information through suitable media will be taken on board. As the strategic role of religious leaders indicates, in the future the Programme will need to look beyond conventional approaches to communication, especially in reaching large numbers of stakeholders.

Innovative Approach to Reaching the Masses in Indonesia

In June 2011, the Ministry of Forestry in Indonesia organized a meeting on REDD+ with religious leaders, which was attended by more than 100 people. In opening the meeting, Zulkifli Hasan, Minister of Forestry, encouraged religious leaders to actively participate in forest conservation and REDD+. Din Syamsuddin, one of Indonesia's prominent Muslim leaders, encouraged leaders of all religions to strengthen their role in the conservation of the country's forest resources. He said, "the role of religious leaders is very strategic, hence we need to join hands with the Government for making REDD+ a success in Indonesia." In signing a declaration, various leaders demonstrated their commitment to forests.

Planning for and implementing REDD+ requires that technical issues are properly addressed. However, a major requirement for making a difference on the ground is to change the behavior of many stakeholders. Effective communication necessitates the use of innovative approaches to reach millions of people. Religious leaders can be a strategic partner in this endeavor. The experience in Indonesia indicates that they want to be involved. Their constituents are at the grassroots, and can be difficult to reach through workshops and written materials. Climate change mitigation is often in line with religious teachings, which can provide other innovative ways to spread messages. The example from Indonesia shows that there may be partners, even beyond religious leaders, in many countries who can help formulate and implement National UN-REDD Programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND KEY FINDINGS

Many lessons have emerged during the implementation of National UN-REDD Programmes in the Asia-Pacific region over the course of the last two years. Below are some broader lessons and recommendations, which should influence REDD+ readiness and implementation in the future.

1. Awareness cannot be raised and capacities cannot be strengthened overnight.

Getting ready for REDD+ requires a wide array of skills and capacities from a wide range of stakeholders, including donors and organizations providing assistance. The first UN-REDD National Programme documents envisioned durations of 20 months for Phase 1. Building capacity of a variety of stakeholders, raising awareness of thousands, if not millions of people, and training sufficient numbers of people for tasks that lie ahead takes time. Looking back, 20 months in most cases has proven unrealistic.

2. Effective stakeholder engagement can produce unexpected positive results.

Involving a variety of stakeholders in planning, decision making and implementation is not the strength of traditional forestry agencies. It would be fair to say that full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders was originally viewed with some suspicion. Treading carefully in the beginning, discomfort about participatory approaches has over time turned into embracing the concept and results justify inclusive ways of working. Many stakeholders have also expressed their appreciation for being asked, having space for their voices to be heard and being recognized as important partners. Future efforts need to build on the progress achieved in order to widen the number of stakeholders engaged, especially the private sector, in

REDD+ readiness. Deforestation and forest degradation are driven by business interests in many countries in this region. Only the effective engagement of the private sector will lead to necessary changes on the ground. Without it, emission reductions might be negligible, as will be performance-based payments.

3. Misperceptions arise easily and are frequently heard.

For example, the concern that «REDD+ will threaten livelihoods and put hundreds of millions of people at risk» comes up often, as does the opposite perception that REDD+ will provide significant income for large numbers of poor people. This indicates that awareness-raising efforts have not yet delivered the needed results. Many Programmes continue to rely on conventional communication tools. There are endless workshops and long lists of published materials. But more work is required to understand the needs of different stakeholders and target messages and information accordingly. Closer relationships with the media and opinion makers are also needed to reach out to millions of people in the most suitable ways. This requires adequate funds and innovative communications specialists. If REDD+ is to advance, key people need accurate facts on REDD+.

4. Most UN-REDD Programme partner countries are currently located in the



tropics. If REDD+ is to be truly global, the uniqueness of country contexts beyond the tropics, such as in Mongolia, needs to be acknowledged and given more attention. While funds are limited, all countries that intend to get REDD+ ready need to be treated fairly, even when their forests do not make the daily news or where opportunities to reduce emissions and enhance removals are lower. Furthermore, there needs to be some leeway regarding what countries have to do. Requesting that a small island country with limited capacities do the same as a much better-resourced larger country needs to be reconsidered by, for example, promoting regional collaboration.

5. Many requirements for sustainable forest management (SFM) are the same for REDD+. While REDD+ requires the development of various elements, many components of REDD+ are also components of good governance and SFM - including updated geographic information and data management systems, forest sector human resource development and inclusiveness in stakeholder consultations. All of them should be viewed as 'no regrets' actions, which means that even if a country does not participate in REDD+, it would be in a better position to enhance its forest management. Most National Programmes do not have to start from scratch. Some policies and measures, such as forest land allocation regulations or guidelines for reduced impact logging, are already in place. Therefore, getting ready for REDD+ is in several ways not different from getting ready for SFM. Also, while readiness does involve many complex issues, many countries are already more advanced than their stakeholders may think.

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UN-REDD

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