

Working Session 2:

Introduction to spatial analysis for REDD+ planning at the provincial level in Viet Nam

Ha Noi, 16 – 27 June 2014

PART 5: Developing an approach for identifying potential zones for enhancement of carbon stocks in Viet Nam context

As discussed in Part 2, each of the five broad REDD+ activities¹ can be achieved by implementing a variety of more specific actions and these actions can only take place in certain locations, for reasons ranging from environmental suitability to existing land-use policies and designations. The multiple benefits and risks associated with REDD+ also vary spatially.

In Part 5 of this working session, we will be thinking about what criteria determine whether land is suitable for actions related to another of the 5 REDD+ activities, **enhancement of forest carbon stocks**. A range of REDD+ actions are relevant to this activity, and these can be more active or more passive in their implementation. For example:

- Afforestation on degraded land (respecting the safeguard that REDD+ actions shall not convert natural forest)
- Implementing assisted natural regeneration in degraded forests (e.g. through enrichment planting)
- Zoning for natural regeneration of degraded forests

As a first step, we will be introducing and discussing a number of existing methods and criteria that can be used to identify areas of forest restoration potential. These approaches share a number of common features, and general issues raised in assessing forest restoration potential include:

- What is the area of analysis?
- Where can forests potentially grow? (Based on factors such as climate, soils, land use)
- What is the current extent of forests?
- Where have forests been lost or degraded?
- What and where are the constraints on restoration? Where is restoration economically, socially, ecologically feasible?
- Where are the opportunities for restoration?
- What are the carbon benefits of restoration?
- What other benefits and costs are associated with restoration strategies?
- Who needs to be involved and how to involve them? (Stakeholders, communities, companies, levels of government)

However, the approaches also differ in some important ways. For example:

- Approaches can be more top-down or bottom-up
- Restoration potential may be measured more by technical parameters (climate, soil, species) or by social-political-economic parameters or considerations (land-use, feasibility, community preferences)
- Spatial analysis is utilised differently in the decision-making processes associated with the approaches

¹ Reducing emissions from deforestation; reducing emissions from forest degradation; sustainable management of forest; conservation of forest carbon stocks; enhancement of forest carbon stocks

- Potential carbon benefits may or may not be included in the analysis
- Whether or not the analysis is undertaken from a REDD+ perspective or to inform REDD+ decision-making
- How potential/levels of potential are classified, e.g. according to different restoration strategies (e.g. mosaic restoration) or simply high/low potential

From a REDD+ perspective, forest restoration can lead to multiple benefits, depending on the strategy and its implementation (e.g. enhancement of carbon stocks, enhanced ecosystem services provision, opportunities for increased/alternative livelihoods). Planning for forest restoration strategies as a REDD+ action needs to consider a particular set of questions, which may affect the approach chosen and the input data. These include consideration of the risks associated with forest restoration REDD+ actions and how they may address the Cancun Safeguards. Safeguards need to be considered and addressed from an early stage to help achieve multiple benefits and reduce risks. All Safeguards may apply, but some relevant examples are:

- Safeguard (b) on transparent and effective national forest governance structures;
- Safeguard (c) on respect for knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and local communities;
- Safeguard (e) on conservation of natural forests & biodiversity and enhancement of other social & environmental benefits.

Reference materials:

- Presentation: Methods and criteria for determining forest restoration potential
- World Resources Institute: Global Assessment of Opportunities for Restoration of Forests and Landscapes: http://www.unep-wcmc.org/system/dataset_file_fields/files/000/000/174/original/WRI_final_method.pdf?1399028475
- IUCN: Assessing Forest Landscape Restoration Opportunities at the National Level: https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/forest_handbook_140321_5_share.pdf

Following the presentation, we will be discussing as a group the approach and criteria for analysis that could be effectively used in Viet Nam to inform REDD+ planning regarding forest restoration.

Discussion questions:

What are the goals of forest restoration in Viet Nam? What about in the pilot provinces?

What question/s about forest restoration actions can spatial analysis help to answer?

What types of forest restoration strategies/interventions are suited to REDD+ in Viet Nam?

What categories of forest would these be relevant to?

What are the implications of the definitions of forest quality/degraded forest for planning these kinds of REDD+ actions?

How should the Safeguards be considered in the analysis of potential areas for forest restoration?