



Photo by Cambodia's UN-REDD National Programme

The UN-REDD Programme recognizes that the participation of stakeholders including civil society organizations (CSO), Indigenous Peoples (IP) and other forest-dependent communities is essential for the success of REDD+ initiatives.

The Programme's strategy on CSO and IP stakeholder engagement focuses on four key outputs:

- IPs, local communities, CSOs, and other relevant stakeholders are **informed** of national and international REDD+ processes, policies and activities.
- Principles, guidelines and procedures for stakeholder engagement in national and international REDD+ processes are developed through **inclusive consultation**.
- Support for the implementation of **effective** stakeholder engagement practices and guidelines in REDD+ countries.
- Stakeholders are supported to **engage in and influence** national and international REDD+ processes.

In line with the key outputs, technical support is provided to countries for the development of national REDD+ stakeholder consultation strategies, decision-making and advisory bodies, strategy validation processes and pilot activities.

How are the stakeholders represented and selected?

The UN-REDD Programme ensures representation of CSOs and IPs on the UN-REDD Programme Policy Board. At the national level, their representation is required on Programme Executive Boards or equivalent bodies.

The procedures and criteria for selecting representatives are developed in consultation with stakeholders. While self-selection through a participatory and consultative process is recommended, key criteria for representatives typically include the following:

The representative or respective organization

- has previous experience working with the government and UN system;
- has demonstrated experience serving as a representative, receiving input from, consulting with, and providing feedback to a wide range of civil society/Indigenous Peoples' organizations;
- has sufficient years of experience in working on issues in the natural resources sector; and
- is an individual(s) recognised as legitimate representative(s) of a national network of civil society and/or Indigenous Peoples' organizations

The application of these procedures has been well illustrated in Cambodia where the Programme facilitated discussions with CSOs and IP groups, and the representatives to the Cambodia UN-REDD Programme Executive Board were selected through a self-selection process. Now, the Programme is reviewing the process and developing a new selection process by improving outreach, the election process and provincial representation for IP groups.

THE UN-REDD PROGRAMME

The UN-REDD Programme is the United Nations Collaborative Initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD). It 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 Programme supports developing countries prepare and implement national REDD+ strategies.

Lesson 1: A transparent process to select CSO/ IP representatives can transform attitudes towards full and effective participation. When conducted in an open manner, it provides fertile ground to sow the seeds of mutual trust between government and non-government stakeholders. As a result, all stakeholders are more interested to learn from previous processes, leading to the design and implementation of more inclusive measures in the future.

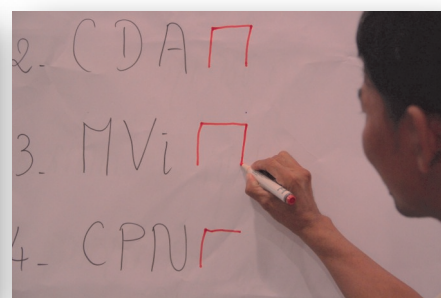
Lesson 2: The selection process can identify, cultivate and nurture a network of potential leaders. Prior to the selection of CSO and IP representatives in Cambodia, both groups worked together to develop the selection process and eligibility criteria. Not only did they gain opportunities to provide feedback and inputs to the UN-REDD Programme activities, they also built their own capacity to take on bigger roles in the national REDD+ process. An added benefit from the process was the emergence of potential grassroots leaders.

Lesson 3: Engage sub-national authorities at key stages of the stakeholder process. The national REDD+ process can often be centralized, and information only trickles down to sub-national levels slowly. Grassroots involvement, as illustrated in lesson two, can promote greater levels of engagement at sub-national levels. In particular, sub-national authorities who are fully informed and aware of the selection process will be better equipped to

support their constituents from the outset. In the long run, the process can also foster a relationship between authorities and marginalised groups.

Lesson 4: A selection process can take time and money. In order to reach out to all stakeholders, the selection process may need to start at a sub-national level (e.g. provinces). When there are a large number of communities spread across the country, starting the selection process at a local level can be time consuming and expensive. Therefore, it is important to combine selection with other activities, such as capacity development and awareness-raising activities, targeting the same groups in the same geographic locations. Furthermore, other activities can help to maintain momentum when the selection process takes longer than expected.

Lesson 5: Stakeholder engagement does not end with the final selection. The process of selecting the CSO and IP representatives is only the beginning of a long-term commitment towards building robust and credible ground support for the national REDD+ programme. These representatives often need capacity development on the more technical aspects of REDD+, and a broad range of awareness-raising materials, preferably in local languages. All these can help them to be more effective, be it contributing to national meetings or communicating with their constituencies.



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