

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

BDP/EEG - MISSION REPORT SUMMARY

Date: 12 December 2013



Name: Celina Yong, UN-REDD

Tel No. +66879246135

Approved Mission Itinerary:

BKK- Colombo – BKK

List of Annexes:

Inclusive Travel Dates:

8 – 11 December 2013

Key counterpart(s) in each location:

- UNDP CO – Ananda Mallawatantri, Ramitha Wijethunga
- NPD – Anura Sathurusinghe
- PMU - Nalin Munasinghe, Prasad Attygalle, Nishantha Mallawaarachchi

Purpose/Objectives of Mission

- Meet and discuss with the NPD, PMU, UN Country Offices and relevant government agencies regarding the progress of the CSO and IP representation in the PEB;
- Discuss with the NPD and PMU to determine the next steps to establish the RPMCC;
- Support the NPD, PMU and CSO Working Committee to finalise preparations for the CSO Platform Workshop on 10 December;
- Ensure the roles and responsibilities of the PEB and RPMCC, their link to the CSO Network, and the umbrella Stakeholder Platform are clearly defined, distinguished and understood by stakeholders; and
- Provide brief orientation of the UN-REDD communication portals, resources and materials to the newly recruited Communications Officer.

Context

The NP Document has provided an overview of expected management arrangements for consultation and participation. There was a subsequent preliminary meeting with several civil society representatives on 5 August 2013 in Forest Department, Colombo to discuss how the civil society can be involved in the consultation and participation processes. A recommendation from this mission was to establish a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) Platform.

Concurrently, the PMU has taken measures to facilitate the selection of CSO and IP representatives for the PEB. A Working Committee (WC), comprising of CSO, was established to guide the process and determine the criteria for the CSO PEB representatives, as well as the formation of the CSO Platform. The WC had decided that there should be 2 CSO representatives, one male and one female, to the PEB, with applications submitted to the PMU through notifications in the local newspapers. An independent selection committee was further established to identify the 2 CSO representatives to the PEB. This was contrary to the earlier recommendation that these representatives be selected by the CSO platform. The WC's rationale was to ensure the final representatives have the clout and experience to contribute to the Programme. Another reason was that the date to form the CSO Platform could not be confirmed earlier, and there was reluctance to further delay the identification of the PEB representatives. The committee also prepared a draft TOR for the CSO Platform which was further discussed and vetted during the CSO Platform Workshop on 10 December.

Summary of Mission Activities/ Findings

1. PEB

a. Member vs observer

- As a matter of urgency, the PMU will need to finalize the ToR for the PEB, and the PEB to adopt the ToR that will differentiate a 'member' from an 'observer'. It is the prerogative of the co-chairs of the PEB to invite observers as and when the need arises. The WC had proposed up to 4 CSO observers, in addition to the 2 official representatives, be allowed to attend PEB meetings. This is an unnecessary duplication in roles as the official representatives should report back to, and receive feedback from, the CSO Platform Convening Committee, specifically, and the CSO Platform generally.
- This was conveyed to, and tentatively accepted by the WC.
- *Follow up: PMU to finalize ToR for the PEB and circulate to the PEB for approval.*

b. Selection of the 2 CSO representatives to the PEB by an independent selection committee

- The 5-member selection committee comprises experts in their respective fields, identified by the PMU, Forest Department and in consultation with key stakeholders.
- Tasked to review the applications received, the committee met on 6 December, but was unable to identify the required 2 representatives due to inadequate supporting documents submitted. They were, however, able to shortlist 10

potential candidates, and had proposed these candidates be asked to provide further documentation.

c. IP representative

- The PMU, with assistance from the Forest Department and prominent CSOs, had organized a series of meetings with the Veddas (indigenous communities) to raise preliminary awareness about REDD+, UN-REDD Programme in Sri Lanka and the PEB (20 – 21 November).
- This was followed by an IP forum workshop on 29 November where the 6 Vedita communities selected a representative for the PEB.
- While efforts to engage and include the Veddas in REDD+ are welcomed, there is still some reservation given the history between the government and the Vedita communities where they have been ostracized. The representative had requested for further information from the PMU to better understand REDD+ prior to the 2nd PEB meeting on 9 January 2014. Nishantha, the new communications officer has provided some materials, and will follow up in the coming weeks. It is expected that this representative and an observer will attend the coming meeting.
- Concerns raised by the PMU were potential challenges to maintain the interest of the Veddas in the readiness phase, and thus continuous participation in the PEB. Some potential mitigating measures are to highlight future roles and benefits from awareness raising, capacity building activities and consultative processes in the preparation of the national REDD+ strategy. It should also be highlighted that the RPMCC may be an avenue to address more structural issues such as tenure and securing livelihoods.
- *Follow up:*
 - *PMU to follow up with IP representative prior to 2nd PEB Meeting and provide further information and orientation, if necessary.*
 - *PMU will also document the IP representative selection process for knowledge management purposes.*

2. CSO Platform

- The workshop on 10 December 2013 was attended by over 40 participants with varying involvement and understanding of REDD+ and the UN-REDD Programme in Sri Lanka. As such, the morning session was designed as a preliminary introduction to the Programme in the country, as well as lessons from stakeholder engagement in the Asia-Pacific region.
- There was great interest and curiosity as this was one of the first few efforts to establish a CSO platform for the forestry sector in Sri Lanka. However, part of the motivation was also to explore potential funding opportunities from the Programme for their own projects. In discussion with the CO and PMU, it was decided that the 7-member Convening Committee selected for the CSO Platform will submit their annual proposed activities with corresponding budgetary requirements. The work plan will be reviewed by the PMU, with feedback from the regional team, and disbursement of funds will be handled by the PMU. No organisations will receive funding directly from the Programme. CO had raised concerns due to recent audit findings for another project where an NGO was deemed to have misused funds allocated.
- The draft ToR and structure of the CSO Platform was generally well-received and accepted by the participants. Revisions proposed were more related to the accuracy and relevance of the Sinhala translation to the local contexts.
- The main contention was the proposal that 2 out of the 7 positions for the Convening Committee will be reserved for the CSO PEB representatives. Even though WC members were present to explain the rationale of an independent selection committee, they eventually agreed with the proposal that all 7 Convening Committee members be selected from those present in the workshop. It was further agreed that these 7 members will nominate 2 from among themselves to sit in the PEB. The motion was put to a vote and over 75% of those present were in agreement.
- Out of the 7 members nominated, 3 were part of the WC who had guided the process.
- The Convening Committee will develop a work plan after the 2nd PEB meeting on 9 January 2014 as the 2 representatives will then be better informed to guide and align the CSO Platform with the NP process.
- *Follow up:*
 - *PMU will need to inform the selection panel and all the applicants of the changes in the selection process. As a precautionary measure, any feedback or complaints received by the PMU should be documented and shared with the PEB, NPD, and Convening Committee, and appropriate responses to complaints determined within a specified time period.*
 - *PMU to inform the CSO Platform of the 2 representatives selected to be in the PEB, as well as circulate the revised ToR.*
 - *PMU will also document the formation of the CSO Platform for knowledge management purposes.*

3. RPMCC

- Anura had submitted a proposal to the Parliament, and upon approval, the key ministries will be invited to nominate a representative to be a member of the RPMCC.

4. Communications Strategy

- A draft of the communications strategy will be circulated for comments by 19 or 20 December. The PMU had proposed that a panel of experts, in addition to CO and UN-REDD regional colleagues, be invited to review the strategy as well as

future materials to be developed.

- I provided a quick overview of existing resources found in the Asia-Pacific webpage in the Programme's website, as well as shared the glossary that the Cambodia REDD+ Programme had developed.

Follow up actions:

- 1) PMU (i) finalizes and circulates the ToR to the PEB for adoption; (ii) informs the independent selection panel and applicants of the rationale for change in selection process; (iii) informs CSO Platform of the 2 PEB representatives; (iv) keep track and circulate any feedback and complaints regarding change in selection process; (v) prepare a report of the IP and CSO selection processes for the 2nd PEB meeting and general knowledge management;
- 2) Regional team – provide feedback to draft communication strategy

Distribution List:

- UNDP UN-REDD