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## Back to Office Report

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Title Regional Stakeholder Engagement Specialist

Date submitted 24 August 2015

1. Practice area: BPPS / Sustainable Development and Resilience Cluster

2. Mission period (incl. of travel days)

From: 15 to 22 August 2015

3. Type of mission: Technical backstopping

4. Clients

UNDP CO – Niamh Collier-Smith (DRR), Nawaraj Chhetri (Portfolio Manager, Climate Change Mitigation and Energy)

WMD – Dr Pema Wangda (CFO), Sigyel Delma (Deputy CFO/REDD+ Focal Officer), Samten Wangchuk (Sr FO)

5. Purpose of mission

To provide technical support during the national consultation workshop for the draft national guidelines, followed by technical backstopping to ensure the delivery of quality output for the TS

6. Documents, materials, resources

Workshop agenda

7. Mission members

Celina Yong

8. Costs

UNDP/UN-REDD global budget

9. Brief summary of the mission

### 9.a Background

In April 2010, Bhutan became a partner country of the UN-REDD Programme (Programme). Since 2010, the Programme has provided support to Bhutan in a number of ways: technical support from all three UN Agencies to a national workshop in REDD+ readiness at Thimphu in April 2012. In early 2012, the RGOB submitted a request for Targeted Support (TS) from all three Agencies. As part of the UNDP component of the TS, UNDP (jointly with FAO) provided support to the development and submission of Bhutan's Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) to the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). UNEP built awareness and capacity on multiple benefits and environmental REDD+ safeguards and initiated the development of Bhutan's approach to REDD+ safeguards, consistent with the UNFCCC Cancun safeguards.

Subsequently, in January 2014, a follow-up request for TS has been received from the Watershed Management Division (WMD) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MoAF). This TS request includes contributions from all three UN-REDD Agencies, and is complementary to activities anticipated to be funded under the FCPF. For example, the R-PP contains relatively little information and assigns only a modest budget for the development of a nationally appropriate system of social and environmental safeguards.

In the context of REDD+ readiness, the focus for WMD from 2014 onwards is the continuation of its work to ensure that REDD+ safeguards are addressed and respected, as elements of the National REDD+ Strategy. Technical support from UNDP includes work on anti-corruption measures, which has since been completed, and measures for the full and effective participation of all relevant stakeholders through the development of a National Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Guidelines for REDD+ Program (national guidelines).

Drafting of the national guidelines and development of REDD+ communications materials commenced in October 2014. The draft national guidelines has since undergone two regional consultations in Trongsa and Trashigang in June 2015. A national consultation workshop was held on 20 August, after which the finalized national guidelines will be endorsed by the REDD+ Technical Working Group and presented to the MoAF to be approved.

### 9.b Main Findings

a) **Existing policies, laws and regulations related to governance and natural resource management are generally robust, but implementation could be strengthened further.**

Bhutan generally has a strong foundation that aims to be inclusive of different types of stakeholders, as evidenced in its Constitution. Furthermore, the Local Government Act 2009 clearly stipulates how representatives from village to block to district to national levels are assigned, what their roles and responsibilities are, and its emphasis on public participation. Participatory approaches have also been promoted through, among others, the national five-year development planning, and social forestry programs.

Improvements, however, could focus in these potential areas: efficacy and accountability of elected representatives at all levels; documentation, distribution and accessibility of decisions; informal feedback mechanisms; and more gender responsive consultation processes. While the draft national guidelines currently situate these considerations within the REDD+ context, improved implementation will have greater benefit in other areas as well.

- b) Upcoming piloting of a REDD+ Payment of Environmental Services (PES) scheme through FCPF funding provides opportunities to test the national guidelines, address implementation gaps identified above, as well as ensure consistent messages regarding REDD+ readiness phase are communicated with relevant stakeholders.**

The REDD+ PES piloting is expected to commence from October 2015 to June 2016, complemented in parallel by an analysis of drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and barriers to sustainable management of forests, enhancement and management of carbon stocks. Learning from other countries in the region, it is imperative that messages communicated to the stakeholders, especially local communities, either through its Community Forestry structures or other forms, are designed to carefully manage expectations. These messages should (i) clearly differentiate the REDD+ phases; (ii) illustrate the focus of a readiness phase vis-a-vis how it contributes to the national aspirations for development and conservation; and (iii) explain the concept of results-based payments. The latter should not be that much of a challenge to Bhutan given its experiences with a handful of PES projects throughout the country.

While the national guidelines will be useful to identify, design and implement the engagement processes with piloting communities, it should also be utilised throughout the development of the national REDD+ strategy, and further revised when more lessons are available. In particular, informal feedback mechanisms, in addition to existing formal mechanisms, should be explored further during the piloting. These lessons should also be linked to on-going work on National Forest Monitoring System.

- c) Carefully manage the relationship between Bhutan's reputation as a well-regarded country (number 30) in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index vis-à-vis the key findings and recommendations from the Corruption Risk Assessment (CRA) for REDD+.**

The CRA study was useful in highlighting current and potential corruption risks area that may be amplified by REDD+. While recognising that it is neither meant as a fully comprehensive nor authoritative study, participants nonetheless expressed reservations in terms of how the findings will be presented to a broader audience. Participants agreed that further possible actions need to fit within broader legal and regulatory frameworks, not according to different donors' requirements. The draft report has been circulated to Technical Working Group members for comments.

- d) Grievance Redress Mechanism(s) for REDD+ provides a potential entry point to utilise the strengths from, and priorities of, Country Office.**

While it is known that Bhutan has both formal and informal GRMs throughout the country, it is not yet clear how these mechanisms can address and resolve potential REDD+ related grievances. Currently, it is also not evident how effective these GRMs are. Therefore the CO's work on access to justice: the upcoming needs assessment of the legal environment; baseline of types and numbers of cases and resolutions; implications on the review of Jabmi Act in relation to legal representation, is a potential entry point for synergies. This is further strengthened by the CO's strong collaboration with the Bhutan National Legal Institute and its focus on Alternative Dispute Resolution.

One of the recommendations from the national consultation workshop on 20 August was to conduct a scoping study of formal and informal GRMs: effectiveness of current GRMs; identify potential REDD+ related grievances; ability of current GRMs at all levels to address these grievances; and identify institutional capacity needs to implement these GRMs. Although having functional GRMs for REDD+ is a prerequisite under FCPF, it is not yet clear the extent of GRM work that will be undertaken by FCPF. As such, this may be a potential area of support by both the Programme and CO. As a side note, UN-REDD and FCPF have jointly developed a [guidance note for REDD+ countries on establishing and strengthening GRMs](#).

#### 9.d Expected Outputs

- Revised National Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Guidelines for REDD+ Program in Bhutan; and
- REDD+ communications materials

#### 10. Key counterparts

- UNDP CO – Niamh Collier-Smith, Nawaraj Chhetri

11. Follow up action matrix

Action to be taken	By whom	Expected completion date
Revise national guidelines	Celina, Sigyel, Samten	Mid-September 2015
Review and finalise REDD+ communications materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 REDD+ pamphlets/brochures on Climate change, forests and REDD+; and REDD+ in Bhutan and local communities;</li> <li>• Drawing competition with winning entries providing illustration for the national guidelines and brochures; and</li> <li>• REDD+ documentary produced by Bhutan Broadcasting Service</li> </ul>	Sigyel, Samten, Celina	Between October to December 2015

12. Distribution list

UNDP UN-REDD, UNDP CO – Niamh Collier-Smith, Nawaraj Chhetri

## Annex 1: Workshop agenda

### National Consultation Workshop for the National Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Guidelines for REDD+ Program in Bhutan

20 August 2015

The objectives of the workshop are:

1. To ensure the draft national guidelines reflect local circumstances for successful REDD+ implementation;
2. To familiarize participants with the status of national REDD+ process; and
3. To share challenges and emerging opportunities from stakeholder engagement in REDD+ in Asia-Pacific.

Time	Agenda Item	Facilitator/Resource Person
9:30 am	Registration	
10:00 am	Opening Remarks	DG, DoFPS
10:10 am	Tea and Photo Session	
<i>Session 1: REDD+ and Stakeholder Engagement</i>		
10:30 am	Status of REDD+ Programme in Bhutan & workshop objectives (10 mins)	WMD
10:40 am	Lessons learned in stakeholder engagement from Asia-Pacific (20 mins) Question and Answer (10 mins)	Celina Yong, UN-REDD Programme
<i>Session 2: Draft National Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Guidelines</i>		
11:10 am	Presentation of draft guideline (including key milestones and feedbacks from regional consultations (40 mins) Question and Answer (10mins)	
12:00 am	Group work on draft guidelines	All participants
1:00 pm	Lunch	
2:00 to 3:30 pm	Group Presentations	Celina Yong/WMD
3:30 to 3:45 pm	Tea break	
<i>Session 3: Update on Corruption Risk Assessment for REDD+</i>		
3:45 pm	Presentation of final draft Corruption Risk Assessment (CRA) for REDD+ in Bhutan	WMD
4.15 pm	Discussion on CRA	WMD
4.45 pm	Next steps Closing remarks	Celina Yong WMD