

UN-REDD PROGRAMME



Concept note

Participatory Governance Assessment (PGA) for REDD+ Viet Nam

Developing training materials and building
capacity for data collection

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Rome, Italy

Background

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) is an effort to create incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forest loss, thus contributing to the global fight against climate change. “REDD+” goes beyond deforestation and forest degradation, and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. The importance of good governance for implementing REDD+ is recognized in United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreements on REDD+: “transparent and effective national forest governance structures” is one of seven key safeguards that REDD+ countries will need to report on.

The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD Programme), which supports national REDD+ readiness efforts, is a collaboration between FAO, UNDP and UNEP. Global activities of the Programme aim to develop common approaches, analyses, methodologies, tools, data and guidelines that facilitate national REDD+ readiness work, among them the Participatory Governance Assessment for REDD+ (PGA). The PGA was developed to provide REDD+ countries with a participatory and inclusive tool to help fulfil REDD+ good governance principles and is being piloted by four countries, namely Nigeria, Ecuador, Indonesia, and Viet Nam.

Participatory Governance Assessment for REDD+

The Participatory Governance Assessment (PGA) is a tool that aims to establish a system of information on governance issues (governance data) through the development of governance indicators that can be measured over a period of time. The process undertaken includes a diverse range of key stakeholders as owners of the process. The difference between a PGA and other more externally driven assessments is that the PGA is fully initiated, implemented, and sustained by national actors. By ensuring the inclusion and participation of all key national stakeholders in the design, selection of methodological framework, and identification of key governance issues to be assessed, the indicators developed to measure or assess governance are likely to be more reflective of the country context, thereby providing more legitimacy and relevance to the data obtained.

Four key principles characterize the PGA process:

- Participation – a broad and representative range of national actors (government, civil society, academics) have opportunities to provide input to key stages of the assessment process
- Transparency – national actors have unrestricted access to information on the assessment process, and the results of the assessment are made available to the public as a public good
- Accountability – country-led assessments act as a critical accountability mechanism for local stakeholders with regard to governance performance

- Legitimacy – national actors agree that the assessment process and the findings are legitimate

When conducted successfully, a nationally-owned governance assessment can strengthen democratic governance in a country, provide opportunities for state-citizen engagement, and ultimately serve as an accountability mechanism among different stakeholders. If the process becomes institutionalized and indicators are measured regularly, governance assessments also provide a reference for planning, monitoring and evaluation of governance performance.

Supporting the PGA process for REDD+ in Viet Nam

The PGA in Viet Nam was launched in 2012, and activities have focused on the pilot province of Lam Dong. PGA piloting activities in Lam Dong province have actively engaged Vietnamese NGOs with experience in forest governance and a range of local stakeholders. FAO engaged international NGO RECOFTC (The Center for People and Forests) to deliver a training on developing indicators and deciding on data collection methods in April 2013. Other Vietnamese NGOs were engaged to facilitate the development of an indicator set fully supported by local provincial and sub-provincial participants and the piloting of data collection in two communes.

Since early 2014, the PGA organizational structure has included a small, multi-stakeholder Expert Group, which was formed to lend technical expertise to the selection of priority governance issues, indicator development and selection of data collection methods, also discussed by the Provincial Working Group (PWG), the larger stakeholder platform established in Lam Dong. Vietnamese stakeholders' expressed demand for more expert input has been reflected in UN-REDD Programme support as well. In 2014, FAO is supporting the next stage of the PGA in Viet Nam by: a) hiring a data collection expert to facilitate discussions and decisions about indicators and data collection methods, draft a data collection manual, ensure data collection quality, and compile an evaluation of the data collection process; b) organizing and funding a 2.5-day training for data collectors on the data collection methods agreed by the Expert Group and PWG; and c) supporting a multi-stakeholder validation workshop of data and preliminary findings in Lam Dong, to be held in June 2014.

Outputs

In order to increase the knowledge and capacity of data collectors and other actors in the PGA process for REDD+ in Viet Nam, to ensure that data collection methods are used appropriately and to ensure that the data collected and analysed in the scope of the PGA are robust, FAO will engage a data collection expert from RECOFTC to deliver two main outputs: a) a data collection manual and b) a data collection training workshop.

Data Collection Manual

This data collection manual will be a technical document tailored to the indicators and data collection methods agreed by the Expert Group, after consultation with the PWG. The manual will include a protocol, guidelines for conducting the agreed data collection methods, field forms for each of the data collection methods, guidelines for conducting data entry and a template for reporting. After revision based on technical inputs from the Expert Group, PWG, and others, the final version of this manual will serve as the core document used in the Data Collection Training Workshop held in Lam Dong province in April 2014. Just as the PGA exercise as conducted in the Lam Dong provincial pilot can serve as a source of lessons and experience, this data collection manual may provide the foundation for forest governance data collection training in Viet Nam. It will contribute to the increased capacity of Vietnamese stakeholders to collect robust governance data, and thus to the

government's need for information that can be used to respond to international reporting requirements under REDD+.

Data Collection Training Workshop

The data collection manual will form the basis of the Data Collection Training Workshop. This training is designed to increase the capacity and skills of data collectors with varying levels of experience, as well as additional members of the PWG. The training will be delivered by the RECOFTC data collection expert over the course of 2.5 days in Da Lat, the capital of Lam Dong province. It will consist of:

1. An introduction to the PGA approach and the context in Viet Nam;
2. Presentation of at least four of the agreed methods, with a focus on primary data collection;
3. Technical exercises using the data collection manual for conducting interviews, field surveys and/or focus group discussions (in response to feedback on the most challenging methods by PWG members who helped pilot the PGA in 2013);
4. A discussion of practical and ethical data collection issues, including common mistakes and how results could be skewed;
5. A briefing on ensuring quality assurance for the data collection and data entry of each method;
6. A briefing on how to take notes for evaluation purposes (e.g. lessons learned) in the field and after fieldwork; and
7. Review of the data collection manual.

The RECOFTC consultant will follow up the training with a 5-page report on the training's outcomes, including a summary of the data collectors' feedback. The consultant will also interview data collectors after the data collection is completed and produce a 5-10 page report on the results of quality assurance processes for Vietnam's PGA data, including a subsection on data collectors' lessons learned from the data collection process.