**Concept paper: Concept paper for Provincial Level Information Seminars**

**Background:**

The United Nations collaborative initiative on reducing emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in developing countries (UN-REDD) is supporting the Government of Sri Lanka to get ready for REDD+. The Sri Lanka UN-REDD Programme will effectively prepare the country to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, gain concrete economic incentives for enhancement and maintenance of forest carbon stocks, and provide multiple benefits for the island's people, environment and economy. Awareness raising is an essential priorities to create the framework conditions for a successful REDD+ readiness process. There is an urgent need to enhance existing awareness, address major challenges through communication and to facilitate effective and informed stakeholder engagement.

**Introduction:**

Raising awareness among senior-level government officials about the UN-REDD National Programme which contributes to the outcome 3 of the communications strategy has become an urgent need in the national REDD+ readiness process in Sri Lanka. This is important for strengthened understanding on REDD+, the REDD+ readiness process and the UN-REDD National Programme among government officers. Provincial Councils has a huge stake in a future REDD+ in Sri Lanka because development, land, environment etc main issues are under the purview of these bodies. Chief Secretaries, District Secretaries, and Provincial level head of key institutions are consulted by the National Planning Department and the Government Treasury in the policymaking process in Sri Lanka. Hence, they play an important role in the policy formulation and a key role in policy implementation. Raising awareness among such target audiences will eventually contribute in enabling a conducive environment for future REDD+ programme in Sri Lanka as implementation of certain activities and awareness raising under the Sri Lanka UN-REDD Programme.

**Rationale & Objectives:**

Sri Lanka UN-REDD Programme is in the process of capacitating government institutions towards the REDD+ readiness. Furthermore, the programme will launch following reports;

1. 2nd December 2014: Report of the Divers of Deforestation study,
2. January 2015: Policies & Measures for REDD+,
3. May 2015: REDD+ roadmap.

These 3 forthcoming outputs that could be useful for enhancing awareness among senior policymakers such as provincial level target groups as well as the general public.

Provincial councils undertake activities as provided for under the Ninth Schedule, which had earlier been undertaken by the Central Government Ministries, Departments, Corporations and Statutory Authorities. Provincial councils are mandated for the protection of the Environment to the extent Permitted, Social Forestry, Land and Land Settlement, and Planning and Implementation of Provincial Economic Plans, Progress Control, Monitoring and Evaluation, Data and Information etc.

Power to formulate National Policy on all subjects and functions therefore extends to the Provincial and Concurrent Lists. However, raising awareness among senior officials of the provincial councils would eventually contribute in addressing issues of Drivers of Deforestation and the REDD+ readiness process etc. Hence, key officials such as Chief Secretary, Provincial Planning offices, District Secretary/ Government Agents, key officers of the Governor’s office and Heads of provincial level authorities should be made aware on the REDD+ readiness process and the UN-REDD National Programme.

The Provincial Councils Act provides for the appointment of a Chief Secretary for each Province by the President, with the concurrence of the Chief Minister of that Province. Provincial Planning offices and key ministries comes under the purview of Chief Executive Officers/Chief Secretaries of Provincial Councils.

The tasks undertaken by the Provincial Planning offices belongs to provincial councils include formulation of appropriate long and medium term strategies for overall provincial development, identification of projects and preparation or needs-based development plans, and formulation of annual budget proposals taking into consideration development priorities. Divisional Secretariat Cells are under the District Secretary/ Government Agents. Purview of the Divisional Secretariat Cells formulate divisional investment proposals, identify viable projects, and monitor physical and financial progress in the implementation of the Annual Provincial Investment Plan. The Governor is appointed by the President. The Constitution assigns a focal role to the Governor in the functioning of devolved governance. The Governor is the source of executive power in respect of subjects and functions transferred to a Province and thus functions as head of the executive.

**Target Group/s:**

* Senior policy makers/Governor/Secretary to the Governor and Chief Secretaries, Secretaries of the Environment Ministries of the Provincial Councils (Local Government);
* Media Coordinator/ Coordinating Secretary to the Governor of the Province/Provincial Council;
* Heads of provincial level authorities/Chief Executive Officers (CEO) s of the Provincial Ministry of Environment, Agriculture etc. and other relevant institutions;
* Invited-local media (Provincial Correspondents).

**Proposed Programme and materials:**

* One day programme conducted at each province or combine some depending on the location and availability of target groups and logistical feasibility;
* Contents will be designed including interactive presentations covering information on Drivers of Deforestation, importance of forest cover for Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka UN-REDD Programme activities, and their relevance for a future REDD+ and achieving national development goals of Sri Lanka;
* 3 Hour information seminar with interactive presentations including a model TV interview (Annex 1) covering key areas (Annex 2) for 50 minutes;
* Key messages and materials for this seminar will be supplemented with the executive summary/ policy brief of the Divers of Deforestation study, and the Policies & Measures for REDD+;
* Frequently Asked Questions about REDD+ (In English and local languages);
* Participants of June-September 2015 workshops will also be provided with excerpts of the REDD+ roadmap;
* Special presentation will be prepared and delivered by Divisional Forest Officer/s covering highlights of importance, challenges and opportunities in the protection of forests and natural resources—with special references to the province where the seminar to be held;
* A short filed visit to nearby location of interest where it has the potential of showing a case of importance of protection of forests and natural resources and its relevance with REDD+.

**Locations and timetable:**

* The districts and provinces which will be covered by these seminars will be as follows:



* Inaugural programme will be held to cover province with larger area of forests and potential risks with increasing demands for lands for current development programmes.
* Key messages and materials for this seminar will be supplemented with the executive summary/ policy brief of the Divers of Deforestation study;
* Other 8 provinces will be covered in order of severity of the deforestation and drivers of deforestation (which will be identified by the Drivers of Deforestation study).

**Coordination and organization and funding:**

* Seminars will be organized by the Forest Department through District Forest Offices and will be held from January to September 2015 covering a province per month. Depending on the logistical feasibility and the availability of target groups some seminars will be merged to cover 2 – nearby provinces;
* Identified Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) for each province will be the in-charge for organizing;
* DFO will call for quotations and organize venue, transport and other logistical matters;
* DFO will request funding from the Forest Department under the UNEP/SSFA allocation and look after the settlement of expenses etc;
* PMU/ Communications Officer and Communication Network members will support with coordination support;
* Visibility materials and information materials will be printed and provided by the PMU/ Communications Officer;
* A news release will be distributed to the local media about the seminar and key messages supplemented with the executive summary/ policy brief of the Divers of Deforestation study;
* NPD/ NPM and the Communication Officer will attend and deliver presentations at the seminars and the Communications Officer will lead the visibility activities (photography, news releases, web news etc).

**Annex 1: REDD Talk (Model TV Discussion Show)**

***For Provincial Level Information Seminars***

**Rationale:**

Despite potential of Sri Lanka’s forest in the context of REDD+ in facilitating Sri Lanka’s national development, there is a lack of understanding on how REDD+ will contribute in achieving national development goals. Also there is a greater need for effective engagement of policymakers and media in achieving objectives of the future- REDD+ in Sri Lanka. At the same time, understanding of the REDD+ and the Sri Lanka UN-REDD National Programme is confused. Hence, creating a better understanding on REDD+ and the Sri Lanka UN-REDD National Programme among journalists is very important. However, presenting such information in an interactive format is a challenging task. Due to information overload inherited weakness in presetting such information through printed materials or documents would not be effective. Hence, having a model Television Show in the form of TV roundtable show) would be useful in clarifying the difference between REDD+ and the Sri Lanka UN-REDD.

**Objective and the proposed Methodology:**

Model TV discussion show will be presented before the audience with the by explaining key concepts and basic difference between REDD+ and the Sri Lanka UN-REDD. Few of the members from the audience will selected before and briefed to ask questions during the show (Annex 1).

They will be provided with questions to ask. Panelists and few participants from the audience will also be properly brief with answers. These questions and answers will be formed by adapting Friendly Asked Questions (FAO) document of the UN-REDD Programme and by adjusting the same to interpret selected key messages of the Communications Strategy of the Sri Lanka UN-REDD Programme. Selected members from the audience will act as callers and ask questions. The presenter of the show will direct the questions to most suitable panel member for a response. The presenter will also direct some questions to be responded by the second caller (who will be briefed with the answer beforehand) and will ask another question after responding to the previous question.

**Expected Outcomes/Outputs:**

1. Interactively presentation of questions and answers for strengthened understanding on REDD+, the REDD+ readiness process and the UN-REDD National Programme.
2. Active involvement of the audience/participants and effectively communicated messages on REDD+, the REDD+ readiness process and the UN-REDD National Programme.
3. Test the validity and the effectiveness of the methodology and replicate, with minor adaptation, at awareness raising workshops for senior officials and policymakers at the national level.

**Annex 2:** **Model Plan for REDD Talk (Model TV Discussion) Show**

*(Questions and answered will be developed based on the D&D Study Report)*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Time** | **Activity**  | **By** | **Preparations**  |
| **From** | **To** |
| 0000 | 0002 | Introduction of the show  | Presenter  | Microphone, Table and chairs with a backdrop, and panel.Questions  |
| 0002 | 0010 | Introduction of the panel  | Presenter | Panel: Mr. Nalin MunasingheMr. Anura SathurusingheInvited/Guest Speaker  |
| 0010 | 0015 | Introduction of the theme  | Mr. Anura Sathurusinghe | Answer Script  |
| 0015 | 0016 | Follow-up question  | Presenter | Answer Script  |
| 0016 | 0020 | Answer Script: Mr. Anura Sathurusinghe | Mr. Anura Sathurusinghe, and Mr. Nalin Munasinghe | Answer Scripts |
| 0020 | 0021 | Call-in Question  | Caller 1 | Question Script and Additional Microphone  |
| 0021 | 0022 | Directing the question  | Follow-up question  | List of answers and respondents  |
| 0022 | 0025 | Response  | Respondent | Answer script provided to the respondent |
| 0025 | 0027 | Clarification on the next issue  | Presenter | Script  |
| 0027 | 0028 | Follow-up question: Major difference between REDD+ and UN-REDD. Directing to Mr. Anura Sathurusinghe | Presenter |  |
| 0028 | 0033 | Response  | Mr. Anura Sathurusinghe | Script  |
| 0033 | 0036 | Question and answer: Major Drivers of Deforestation and Specific policy issues on REDD+  | Presenter | Responded by:Anura SathurusingheInvited/Guest Speaker  |
| 0036 | 0038 | What is the significance of Sri Lankans Forests in the context of REDD+? Question to the panel | Presenter  | Script  |
| 0038 | 0042 | Responses  | * Mr. Anura Sathurusinghe
* Invited/Guest Speaker
 | Script |
| 0042 | 0050 | Caller Questions and responses by the panel and second callers  | Panel and second callers | Q&A Scripts  |