

## Consultation Group Self-selection Process

### Issue 1: Who is eligible to cast votes?

Eligible voters should be organizations based in Cambodia, rather than individuals. Each organization is entitled to vote only once (since each stakeholders group will elect two representatives, each eligible voter will have two votes, but the point is that each organization can do this only once – you cannot have multiple people from the same organization voting).

### Issue 2: Voter lists

There should be voter lists prepared for each stakeholder group. For Community Forest/Protected Area/Fisheries User Groups, this is presumably a simple process since there are only a limited number of such groups in Cambodia, so the eligibility is self-evident. For international NGO's, such a list is also probably self-evident. For national NGO's, academia and the private sector, it is less clear, as there are enormous numbers of organizations, and defining where to place the limits in determining which organizations are eligible and which are not must therefore be to some degree subjective. To avoid any suggestion of government interference, it must be clear that the decision on eligibility lies with the respective member of the VFC (national NGO, academia, and private sector members). The IP selection process is already established.

### Issue 3: Voting process

The initial idea was for votes to be cast at a national selection workshop, proposed for August 28-29, and this should continue, through a secret ballot.

In order to provide greater flexibility in voting, the VFC has suggested an on-line process, possibly using the Survey Monkey package. In order to avoid any future accusation of bias, on-line voting be offered for all 8 stakeholder groups even though we suspect that, for at least 4 of them (Community Forest/PA/Fisheries and IPs), the use of on-line voting is likely to be limited.

In order to minimize the risk of voter fraud and to maintain the secrecy of the ballot, for on-line voting the following process is suggested:

- Eligible voters receive the on-line link to the survey of their stakeholder group, which may also be password-protected.
- At least two neutral UN employees based in Bangkok monitor the voting. When a vote is cast, the voter is required to state the name of the organization and the name of the individual casting the vote on behalf of that organization; otherwise the vote is void.
- UN/Bangkok checks the name of the organization against the list of eligible voters.
- Assuming the organization is on the list of eligible voters, either the UN/Bangkok or CRTS Communications Officer contacts the organization to check that the individual who voted is a *bona fide* representative of the organization and was mandated to vote on behalf of the organization.
- At the end of the voting period, the two UN/Bangkok employees independently calculate the number of valid votes for each candidate, and communicate the results (but not the individual votes) to the CRTS Communications Officer. The confidentiality of the voting is therefore maintained.

It is believed that since there are likely to be constraints to on-line voting (limited access for some groups) and in-person voting at the workshop (limitations on travel to PP), so a third option is suggested. This should be postal balloting - eligible voters should be given the option of sending their vote by post which must be received by a certain date, e.g., 5 working days before the national selection workshop. As for on-line balloting, measures need to be taken to avoid voter fraud and multiple voting. The measures can be the same as for the on-line balloting, except that, in order to reduce costs, the postal ballots can be sent to the UNDP Country Office in Phnom Penh, and two employees of the CO undertake the same checking process as for the on-line balloting. However, postal voting will be required only if the number of candidates exceeds 2 for any community network. Since, currently, there are two candidates or fewer for each of the community networks, postal voting is not required. Furthermore, it would be extremely difficult to organize postal voting in the remaining time available.

#### **Issue 4: Preparation for voting**

All eligible voters should receive information about the mandate and role and responsibilities of the Consultation Group, and brief biographical descriptions of the candidates for their stakeholder group. This is already planned by the VFC.

Such information should be available on the REDD+ Cambodia web-site, and should be sent to each eligible voter by email. In the event that eligible voters do not have email access (or we have reason to believe that, even though they have email access, email is rarely used), we need to take measures to ensure that such eligible voters do receive the information in time to allow them to consider their vote.

In the event that postal voting were to be required, to avoid any future accusation of government interference, the distribution of such information should be assigned to an independent non-governmental organization – ideally, one which is not directly involved in REDD+ in Cambodia – the DPA is a possible example.