

# Independent Technical Review: Myanmar

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UN-REDD PROGRAMME

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Reviewer: Cor Veer

Date: 25 October 2015



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**General comments on the submission document of Myanmar (maximum 200 words):**

The Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) is highly relevant for Myanmar in view of the increasing pressure on natural resources as a result of the 'opening up' of the country. The upside of the opening of Myanmar towards the outside world is the increasing interest in international technical cooperation in the various reform processes that have been initiated. The R-PP has potential to support these reforms particularly in the forest and environment sector, in addition to contributing to the global good of climate change mitigation.

The R-PP presents a clear and coherent strategy aimed at enhancing national capacity for REDD+ implementation through more effective stakeholder engagement, and development of participatory governance, safeguards, forest monitoring, and a national REDD+ strategy. For each outcome, outputs, activities, and resources are identified in manner that enables stakeholders to readily grasp the logic of the proposed project. Also indicators, baseline information, targets and means of verification are presented for project monitoring purposes.

Fifteen relevant risks threatening the success of the project and measures to mitigate these risks are presented in a manner that demonstrates the challenges the project faces, as well as illustrates ways in which these risks may be managed.

The main recommendation for strengthening the RR-P is to consider ways of addressing the multiple benefits from the 'plus' in REDD+ more explicitly and support the transition towards more participatory forest management in the country.

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## Assessing the submission document against review criteria

(Please refer to the TORs and supporting documents)

1. Ownership of the Programme (maximum 150 words):

The Readiness Preparation Proposal was submitted by the Director General of the Forest Department (FD) of the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECAF), the government agency in charge of forest administration and environmental conservation in Myanmar. The Forest Department was also responsible for the preparation of the Myanmar REDD+ Readiness Roadmap, indicating strong FD ownership. Other indications of FD's interest and commitment to REDD+ are the REDD projects and programs supported by various international organizations (see the overview REDD+ Roadmap Implementation Partners on p.2-6 of the R-PP). The Roadmap was prepared with the contributions from three multi stakeholder technical working groups, and outputs from 6 consultation events, enhancing ownership by other stakeholders. The possible downside of this strong (sectoral) ownership of the R-PP is well recognized (in both the roadmap and the R-PP) as a risk for success in generating collaboration with other government agencies.

2. Level of consultation, participation and engagement (maximum 150 words):

The Roadmap has been prepared with high levels of participation and engagement from multiple stakeholders and consultation of many more at both national and sub-national level. Adequate resources are allocated in the R-PP to maintain and strengthen stakeholder participation and engagement in the implementation of the roadmap, and strengthen their capacity (under outcome 1) as well as enable their participation in effective and participatory governance arrangements (under outcome 2). The funding proposal was prepared by the FD with technical support from UN agencies, and submitted for review and comments in a validation meeting attended by 36 representatives from various stakeholders. The meeting endorsed the proposal with a recommendation to clarify the project duration and adjust the proposal if the duration would be less than the 4 years for which the project was designed.

3. Programme effectiveness and cost efficiency (maximum 100 words):

The intended effect of the REDD Readiness project is enhanced national capacity for REDD+ implementation through strengthened engagement of stakeholders, enhanced capacity for participatory governance, development of safeguards, national forest monitoring, and of a national REDD+ strategy. Indicative activities to achieve outputs contributing to the 5 outcomes have been identified and resources allocated. The logic of the results framework makes much sense and the framework enables stakeholders to understand how activities, outputs and outcomes can contribute to enhancing national capacity for REDD+ implementation. If the outcomes were indeed achieved by the end of the project, at a cost of 5.7 million USD then the project would have been very cost efficient.

4. Management of risks and likelihood of success (maximum 150 words):

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Fifteen risks have been identified: 9 of a political, social and environmental nature, 3 political risks, 2 organizational and 1 operational risk. Examples of political, social and environmental risks include risks associated with international climate change negotiations and availability of financial resources resulting from these, influential stakeholders taking control, weaknesses in policy implementation, and undesirable impact on access and tenure arrangements. Organizational and operational risks include coordination issues between agencies and levels in government and delays in recruitment of staff or delays in transfer of funds.

For each of the risks, the probability and impact of its occurrence have been identified, as well as mitigation measures. E.g., to mitigate and manage the risk of low cooperation and coordination among government agencies the REDD+ task force has been formed and efforts are to be made to ensure that it operates and is perceived as a multi-agency body rather than one dominated by the Forest Department.

Particularly political risks will pose challenges for success of the project. However, if the mitigation measures are implemented and adjusted based on lessons in project implementation it is likely that the risks can be managed without significantly affecting achievement of the project's objectives.

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## Assessing the submission documents by element of the Warsaw Framework

(Please refer to the TORs and supporting documents)

1. National REDD+ Strategy and/or Action Plan (maximum 300 words):

R-PP Outcome 5 refers to the development of the national REDD+ strategy, based on REDD+ strategy analysis including assessment of drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and identification of candidate strategies through consultation, to be completed at the end of 18 months. Topics for support studies include forestry sector institutional and context analysis; review of policies, laws and regulations; compilation of list of candidate strategies for forestry and non-forestry sectors; study of other forestry support programs and costs of REDD+ implementation in these. National stakeholder consultations are planned to review and validate candidate strategies and later to review and validate the final list of candidate strategies. The outputs from the latter consultation form the basis for identification of REDD+ strategy options to be validated by stakeholders leading to a finalized and approved National REDD+ Strategy by the end of year 3.

In view of the paucity of relevant existing information in Myanmar, the series of planned studies and consultations appear to be necessary and sufficient to contribute to informed decision making by stakeholders, enhancing the likelihood of adoption of an effective national REDD+ strategy that is widely supported.

2. National Forest Reference Emission Level and/or a Forest Reference Level (maximum 200 words):

R-PP Outcome 4 refers to development of Myanmar's national forest monitoring system (NFMS) and preliminary forest RELs/RLs. The three outputs contributing to this outcome include capacity building and development of national action plan for NFMS and FRL; development of Satellite Land Monitoring System and web-GIS portal and the design and piloting of a multi-purpose national forest inventory. For REL/RL it is planned that an Action Plan is endorsed by the government by the end of year 2 and that various methodologies for REL/RL development will have been piloted at demonstration sites. A range of capacity building activities support the development of the Action Plan, including facilitation of regular meetings of NRMS/FRL technical working group; capacity needs assessments; technical support; advice and training on FRL development; and the collation and review of regional and international experiences on FRL.

Further enhancing the chances of success in this element is the availability of a technical expert on NFMS/RLs supporting the Technical Working Group and assisting in the planning and implementation of activities. The proposed mix of activities and expertise is likely to contribute to an effective action plan, national capacity to implement the plan and effective methodologies demonstrating how the action plan can be implemented in a sound manner.

3. Systems for National Forest Monitoring (maximum 300 words):

Most of the outputs and activities under R-PP Outcome 4 refer to capacity building and design, development and piloting of the national forest monitoring system. Capacity building activities include TWG facilitation, capacity needs assessments, technical support and training on NFMS and IPPCC guidelines, GHG inventories and UNFCCC reporting, collation and review of regional and

international experiences, providing recommendations on the role of local communities and sub-national management units, prepare action plan, develop technical manuals on emission factors and activity data and the development of central GHG database and archiving system. For the development of the land monitoring system and web-GIS portal technical support, training and equipment will be provided and a real time forest monitoring system developed including environmental, socio-economic and governance indicators to monitor outcomes of REDD+ activity implementation. For the design and pilot of the multi-purpose NFMs, training on inventory methods will be provided, inventory data harmonized, databases developed, and multi-purpose NFI designed, including field manuals and implementation plan. The NFI information system will be linked to the web-GIS portal, methodology for assessing emissions from forest degradation developed, equipment for field work purchased and the NFI field methodology piloted at a demonstration site.

This component is the most important in the R-PP in terms of resources allocated, and technical expertise required. In view of the critical importance of reliable data on forest conditions and changes for all forest policy and planning decisions this emphasis is well justified. It also means that success in achieving the outcome of this component will have a positive impact not only on REDD+ planning and implementation but also on all other forest policy and planning decisions. The mix of activities, resources and expertise proposed for this component makes such success likely.

Particularly the web-GIS portal offers opportunities to explore inclusion of data on customary claims and uses of forest, so as to support the development of participatory forest management. Though in theory such data could be generated in NFI, it may be –certainly initially- necessary to look for collaboration with projects promoting participatory forestry for the generation of data.

#### 4. Safeguard Information System (maximum 300 words):

R-PP Outcome 3 refers to the definition of REDD+ safeguards and safeguards information for Myanmar's context and the development of a national safeguards information system. The definition of safeguards is planned to take off with the development of a safeguards roadmap, followed by regional and national consultations to define safeguards in the national context and review of relevant existing policies, laws and regulations. Next relevant information sources are to be identified and new ones proposed where needed. A grievance mechanism or REDD+ implementation is to be established as well. The development of the safeguards information system (SIS) starts off by review of existing information systems and identification of gaps. A proposal for SIS structure will be developed for the provision and sharing of information, including synergies with NFMS. The SIS will be piloted, refined and finalized. And a proposal developed for summary of information to be provided to UNFCC.

As for the other outcomes, the summary of the process for development of SIS appears to be very well thought out, and the allocation of resources (over 0.5 k) adequate for achievement of the outcome.

Note that the protection of customary forest uses and claims are most likely to emerge as important (or major) issues in safeguarding and could therefore be considered in the synergies with the NFMS.

#### 5. Stakeholder engagement and consultation (maximum 300 words):

R-PP Outcomes 1 and 2 refer to engagement and capacity building of stakeholders (Outcome 1) and development of effective and participatory governance arrangements (Outcome 2). Key elements of the development process for stakeholder engagement include the recruitment and involvement of a wider range of stakeholders, establishment of representation and consultation systems as well as

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support to Task Force, REDD office and technical working groups. For the development of the capacity of national institutions to implement participatory governance (outcome 2) a competency framework will be developed and a capacity building needs assessment conducted, as well as a national communication strategy developed and communication materials produced. Training and awareness raising will be provided for all stakeholders and the institutional structures and arrangements adapted. Also, the legal and policy framework will be reviewed through a series of analyses and consultations resulting in a list of proposed amendments to be submitted for approval by government.

The outputs and activities appear relevant and adequate, and the provision of a technical support officer crucial for success, also in the more challenging aspects of enabling representation and consultation of grassroots and sub-national stakeholders.

6. Schedule and Budget\_(maximum 300 words):

In the R-PP Results Framework targets (and relevant outputs and activities) are scheduled according to (semi-) annual periods. The needs for sequencing have been well addressed where needed. The proposed schedule provides a solid basis for the development of detailed work plans. Budget allocations and schedule tally well with the input needs for planned activities.

Budget allocations are specified by output and period and vary by outcome area from 420 k for outcome 5 (strategy development) to 1800 k for outcome 4 (forest monitoring), with 570 k allocated for outcome 3 (safeguards), 600 k for outcome 1 (stakeholder engagement) and 900 k for outcome 2 (participatory governance arrangements).

The variation in budget allocated appears to correspond well with the variation in intensity of activities identified by outcome area.

7. Anticipated Monitoring and Evaluation Framework\_(maximum 300 words):

The project monitoring and evaluation framework is presented as part of the results framework indicating for each output: indicators, baseline information, target, means of verification and risks and assumptions.

The indicators and proposed arrangements for both internal monitoring and external evaluation appear to be relevant and adequate to enable tracking results and adjusting process when needed, based on lessons from implementation.

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**Suggestions for improving the technical design of the submission of Myanmar  
(maximum 400 words):**

The review has not been able to identify major flaws or shortcomings in the design of the project. The design appears sound, clear in its logic and well presented.

There is however an opportunity to strengthen the project in its implementation without requiring major changes in design. As mentioned in the review of elements 3 and 4, there are opportunities to contribute to the strengthening of policy and planning of participatory forest management and governance, through addressing customary forest uses and claims in forest inventory, GIS and web portal and in the safeguard activities.

Collaboration with networks, organizations and projects working on the promotion of participatory forest management could be explored for this purpose.