

# Independent Technical Review: Myanmar

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UN-REDD PROGRAMME

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Reviewer: Vianney Labé

Date: from 21 to 27 October 2015



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## **General comments on the submission document of MYANMAR:**

Considering Myanmar's natural, economic and social situations, REDD+ is essential for the sustainable development of the country. Because of the present political, economic and social transformation the country is undertaking sound and far sighting decisions and steps have to be taken right now.

The document "The Support to the implementation of Myanmar's REDD+ Readiness Roadmap" ("support") under review proposes several actions contributing to the Myanmar REDD+ Readiness Roadmap ("RRR"). However, as it stands, and in the absence of problems and objectives causal analysis, it is difficult to assess whether these proposed actions are those relevant (responding to existing present priority needs) and feasible within the present environments, not least the transitional period the country is going through.

A comprehensive problem analysis along with the underlying theory of change (ToC) would therefore credibly justify better the choices of strategies made and the appropriateness of the intervention (if necessary annexed to the document). Moreover, a straightforward interlocking between the "support" and the "Myanmar REDD+ Readiness Roadmap" results frameworks is required for the coherence of the programme at country level and beyond.

We recommend the document to be more evidence based, strategic, specific and pragmatic result oriented.

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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):

Considering the PEB's composition, there is a risk that the different voices of various peoples living in/or from the forest could be marginalized in the steering of the "support".

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

It appears that the IP and CSO observers were consulted briefly and the outcome of these consultations and were made available after the submission of the document to REDD+ secretariat. The "support" should strive to make the voice of the voiceless heard in this very complex agenda evolving with asymmetric representations and powers. The organization of the management should ensure that IP and CSO sitting at the table are truly representing most, if not all, the vulnerable or marginalised inhabitants of the forests.

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

Although the GOM is very much engaged in the process of initiating this intervention, the effectiveness of the latter depends very much on the relevance and the ex-ante feasibility assessment of the objective, outcomes and outputs of the intervention. In turn, the achievement of those rely on the realization of internal and external conditions for which the identification seems, in its present form, incomplete (see below). The lack of clear positioning of the actions of the "support" within the overall intervention logic of the Myanmar REDD+ Readiness Roadmap prevents a robust ex-ante assessment of its effectiveness. These considerations apply also to the analysis of the cost-effectiveness since the document does not provide information on whether and how the budget of the "support" derives from the "RRR".

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

Assuming that all implementing partners will strive to make the project a success, risks and likelihood of success are very much a function of external factors. With no problem analysis nor ToC provided, it is difficult to identify those external influential factors, including the roles and contributions of other partners (see chapter "introduction") to the "support" intervention. More specifically, based on our experience in Myanmar and elsewhere, risks related to government coordination (#2 & #4) are found under estimated. Moreover, Myanmar facing land tenure issues, return of displaced people and potential sources of conflicts the absence of a comprehensive power structure analysis, invite us at considering possible underestimation of risks related to stakeholders (#6), IP and other vulnerable groups (#9 to 15).

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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):

Complements from partners are presented for the “RRR” components but their exact inputs into “support” remains unclear.

Competition for natural resources is an acute issue in Myanmar. Hence, the analysis of engagement from women and ethnic minorities as well as on the peace process and post conflict situations seems very light.

Linkages between “support” and “RRR” both in terms of logic and budget are not clear.

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

See below

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

This element is key to the overall “RRR”.

Rough calculations put the outcome for NFMS and RL (“support” outcome 4) at some 1.9 MUS\$; whereas the budget for components 5 & 6 of the “RRR” (focusing on the same subjects) reaches some 6.2 MUS\$. This would imply that, by the end of year 4 of “support”, the development of NFMS and RL will still be quite limited compared to its desired status and not necessarily the expected backbone information system that REDD+ requires.

4. Safeguard Information System (maximum 300 words):

Because of the present transition period, many sector-wide policies are expected to change or start being initiated. Many of them might impact the sustainable development of the forestry sector. Therefore REDD+ has to play an important role in analysing as well as providing factual and far sighting inputs to non-forestry sector policy makers.

Although the “support” rightly identify this crucial role, it seems to have set ambitious milestones and targets for the Safeguard outcome, considering the starting point and the overall works that the transitional period will demand.

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

The level of depth and manner of consultations with the people living in forest or/and from its products does not appear clearly.

6. Schedule and Budget (maximum 300 words):

The document does not show how the budget for the “support” intervention is drawn from the “RRR” budget.

The annual budget allocations are detailed considering the level of information provided for the rest of the intervention.

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

Considering the crucial contributions of externalities to the success of the “support”, assumptions should be closely monitored (fully included in the M&E radar) and reassessed during regular review meetings.

Indicators are still in their preliminary formulation and many miss a baseline or a benchmark.

Activities and strategy for monitoring and evaluation are weak as reflected by the amount allocated whereas M&E and learning are key pillars of the Aid effectiveness initiative.

## **Suggestions for improving the technical design of the submission of MYANMAR:**

**Make clear and comprehensive problem and strategy analysis. Set a ToC and identify/quantify contributions from partners. Those as well as the remaining external conditions should be considered as assumptions.**

**Harmonise and reinforce interlock logics of interventions of the “RRR” and the “support”.**

**Integrate IP&CSO observers’ recommendations into the analysis and the strategy.**

**Exact responsibilities and contributions of FD and national implementing partners should be objectively assessed and clearly articulated.**

**Considering the period of political transition Myanmar is going through, it might be advisable that the “support” gives priority to tangible, “politically & socially neutral” technical results (e.g. NFMS, FRL) rather than less tangible expectations (e.g. participation). This suggestion needs to be confirmed, adapted or rejected once the problem analysis and the ToC are clearly established.**

**Indicators’ definitions and their means of production will have to be reviewed during formulation and the inception.**

**The M&E and learning system should be reinforced both technically and financially. Internal reviews, at national and local levels, should take place at least annually and include results framework updates. An external MTR with sufficient resources, proper means for final, and impact evaluations are strongly recommended.**

**Ways for effective inclusion of the voices of the different peoples living in/from the forests in the steering of the intervention should be strengthened, possibly by involving their representatives at various levels of the management (central, local etc.)**

**A rotational chair of the PEB would promote participation and ownership.**

**Restatement of the UNDG principles (for instance in the § “management”) would set a strong compass for the steering and the implementation of the “support”.**