Introduction: The Warsaw Framework for REDD+

The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at its 19th meeting in Warsaw in November, 2013, reached a series of agreements which are collectively known as the "Warsaw Framework for REDD+". The framework requires REDD+ countries to develop a National Strategy or Action Plan (NS/AP) and post a link to it on the UNFCCC REDD+ information hub (Decision 1/CP.16, and Decision 9 & 11/CP.19).

There are no detailed prescriptions regarding the content of an NS/AP, or template to follow. Nevertheless, Decision 1/CP.16 (paragraph 72) requests that, when developing and implementing their NS/AP, developing country Parties address:

- Drivers of deforestation and forest degradation;
- Land tenure issues;
- Forest governance issues;
- Gender considerations;
- Cancun Safeguards; and
- Ensuring the full and effective participation of relevant stakeholders, *inter alia*, indigenous peoples and local communities.

For any country, the quality of both their NS/AP document itself, and the process through which it was developed (considering factors such as participation, addressing the main drivers, cross-sectoral dialogue and coordination) is important in attracting financial support towards implementation of the NS/AP.

In response to requests from partner countries in the Asia/Pacific region for further guidance and support on this topic, the UN-REDD Programme organized a regional knowledge exchange event on NS/APs. It was held in Bangkok, 29-31 July 2015. The objectives of this event were to:

i) Enhance understanding of key issues and good practices in the development of NS/APs; and
ii) Advise the UN-REDD Programme on options for supporting the development of NS/APs.

Taking account of experiences of a number of countries, including not only those within the Asia/Pacific region, but also from Brazil and Ecuador, several key issues and lessons emerged. They are summarized below.

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[1] *Booklet of key decisions relevant to REDD+:* http://www.cambodia-redd.org/category/document-centre/redd-materials/cop-decisions

Issue 1: Drivers of deforestation and forest degradation go beyond forests and forestry. A high-quality NS/AP process needs to build support and "ownership" among diverse stakeholders across sectors

Common direct drivers of deforestation include agricultural expansion, mining, and infrastructure development. Consequently, as drivers encompass a wide range of sectors and stakeholders, the development and implementation of an NS/AP requires building broad support and ownership, including across groups that may have conflicting interests. These should be identified, understood and engaged through an ambitious but realistic stakeholder engagement and communications plan.

Country Experiences Box 1: Indonesia, Malaysia and Mongolia

- In Indonesia, initial attempts to prepare a National Strategy following a "top-down" approach failed to secure broad support. A second attempt focused on understanding the national policy landscape and, through the establishment of a multi-sectoral task force, built a "movement" for radical changes in forest management that enjoyed wide support. The work of the task force was supported by awareness campaigns at subnational, national and international levels leading to high-level political support.
- Malaysia stressed all the REDD+-relevant actions that ministries are already implementing, then organized a dialogue to identify what more could be done.
- Mongolia undertook a comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise which allowed identifying stakeholders supportive of REDD+ as well as their level of influence, an important step in identifying ways to engage them and gain their support.

Country representatives attended the NS/APs Regional Knowledge Event in Bangkok, Thailand © 2015 UN-REDD Programme

Key Lessons

- Identify those stakeholders who: 1) can help to tackle drivers; and 2) have interests in maintaining the *status quo*; stakeholder mapping including an analysis of interests is a key starting point;
- The amount of time and resources for a truly effective engagement process is usually underestimated;
- Understanding the relationships between stakeholders is essential in designing a process to build broad ownership – for example, one stakeholder group may not be willing to engage in the presence of another group;
- REDD+ should be communicated in ways that makes sense to people (avoiding jargon), embedding it in broader discourses such as those of sustainable development and integrated rural development;
- It is more productive to focus on engagement rather than pointing fingers ('blaming'); REDD+ should be presented as an opportunity not a threat; and
- Use champions at both national and subnational levels.

Issue 2: NS/APs may take various forms, from a short document providing a framework for sectoral and/or subnational action plans, to a comprehensive and detailed document

The form of a NS/AP document will depend on many factors, including the political structure of the country, existing strategic documents to which REDD+ will be linked, and the direct and underlying drivers that need to be addressed. It is likely that periodic reviews and revisions will be required, as political, economic and policy circumstances change, and improved data becomes available over time. Countries may therefore want to consider this issue early on.

> **Country Experiences Box 2: Brazil and Malaysia**
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> - Brazil's National Strategy will be a short document (less than 30 pages), outlining the broad approach to reducing emissions and the institutional arrangements required to achieve the desired results. Detailed Policies and Measures (PAMs) will be defined in subsidiary sectoral as well as biome-based Action Plans (e.g. the existing "*Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon*").
> - In contrast, the National Strategy of Malaysia, also nearing finalization, is a longer and more detailed document focusing on one REDD+ activity (Sustainable management of forests). The Strategy preparation process has benefited from an active campaign with parliamentarians to build support.

Participants at the NS/APs Regional Knowledge Event discussing country experiences, Bangkok, Thailand. © 2015 UN-REDD Programme

Key Lessons

- Most strategic documents are subject to revision on a regular basis to accommodate changing contexts (e.g. issues to be addressed, political priorities, lessons learnt, available means), and so should NS/APs;
- Most countries have followed a structure based on the overarching guiding questions: 'Why?' / 'What?' / 'How?'[2];
- UNFCCC decisions encourage an iterative process following a step-wise approach in terms of scope and scale of REDD+ implementation, priority drivers addressed, etc. This should be reflected in the NS/AP design process; and
- The central government at the national level should be in the driving seat, coordinating work streams and actors.

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[2] *'Why' is the country engaging in REDD+ (socio-economic & forest context, opportunities from & vision for REDD+); 'What' is the country going to do to implement REDD+ (which PAMs, and how different this is from "business as usual"); "How' the country is going to ensure this happens (insitutional, legal & financial arrangements)*

Issue 3: Making a business case for REDD+ is a challenge and depends on the country context, but it is critical in building support for REDD+ and shaping a country vision for REDD+

REDD+ is a voluntary mechanism that should contribute to sustainable development. Embedding REDD+ in national priorities while addressing drivers of deforestation and forest degradation may be a challenge but developing such a national vision for REDD+ is essential in securing support from the various stakeholders.

Country Experience Box 3: Ecuador and Indonesia

- In Ecuador, REDD+ is based on an economic transformation aimed at providing alternatives to economic activities resulting in forest destruction while increasing the economic value of standing forests, and linked to national development policies (e.g. Socio Bosque; the Productive Transformation Program in the Amazon).
- In Indonesia, the key message to other sectors was that "REDD+ is not a goal in itself, but a vehicle to achieve national development priorities in the land sector", following a two-phased approach: first creating momentum and ownership, then implementing REDD+.
- The "One-map" process undertaken in Indonesia, aimed at depicting on a single map all current and planned sectoral land uses, is an opportunity – though challenging – to create a dialogue among sectors and shape a common understanding of issues.

Plenary discussion at the NS/APs Regional Knowledge Event
in Bangkok, Thailand. © 2015 UN-REDD Programme

Key Lessons

- In order to implement the NS/AP to achieve results and receive results-based payments, synergies should be sought between 'REDD+ finance' and other finance that is relevant to REDD+ (e.g. national budget, ODA, private sector). In order to achieve this, embedding REDD+ into the national development framework is key;
- Unless the NS/AP is firmly grounded in economic reality, it may not be acceptable, viable or sustainable; however the point is not for REDD+ finance (investment or results-based payments) to cover all costs of implementation, but to use REDD+ to meet part of the costs for implementing PAMs that contribute to more than REDD+ objectives alone; and
- REDD+ is an opportunity to: 1) strengthen the implementation of policies and enforcement of laws and regulations; 2) strengthen coordination among different sectors; 3) create synergies; and 4) mainstream climate change PAMs into legal and policy frameworks.

Issue 4: Although it is important for REDD+ to be aligned with the broader national policy framework, alignment may not be perfect, and will rather be a moving target as policies continuously evolve

Achieving broad support is easier if REDD+ is aligned with the broader development framework. However, sectoral policies may still reflect outdated emissions-intensive development visions as REDD+ and national development planning and budgeting timeframes may differ. Even though it may not be possible in the short term to align all sectors adequately, the objective should be to seek gradual convergence, with REDD+ serving as a catalyst, towards a greener economy.

Country Experience Box 4: Ecuador and Malaysia

- In Ecuador, REDD+ is deeply grounded in the country's legal and institutional framework, from the Constitution to the National Development Plan, and is part of the Climate Change Strategy.
- In Malaysia, REDD+ planning started during the budget planning cycle, making it difficult to secure financial support. The upcoming REDD+ Strategy supports the 10th/11th Malaysia Plans which will allow integration into the next planning cycle.

Jungle, Taman Negara, Malaysia. © 2009Marco Abis,
Courtesy of Photo (https://www.flickr.com/photos/matley0/4004128703/)

Key Lessons

- When developing an NS/AP, a country may first consider aligning REDD+ to national objectives, then look for opportunities to secure REDD+ finance for investment;
- Understand first the objectives and content of sectoral policies and plans (including the political economy behind them), then explore options for alignment;
- Understanding the way budgets are allocated to different sectors is important;
- REDD+ should be seen as an opportunity to gradually shift towards a "green economy";
- Prepare to align with planning cycles once feasible; and
- Start securing support from the sectors that are willing and/or easier to reform.

Issue 5: Analyses of drivers (and barriers to the "+" activities[3]) are essential, and these must identify and analyse the underlying drivers, which are the most important to tackle through relevant PAMs

Reducing emissions (or enhancing removals) from forests requires actions to address drivers or to overcome barriers to conservation and sustainable management of forests. This requires a very careful analysis of these processes, and especially of the underlying drivers which have a tremendous influence on direct drivers and which must therefore be tackled. Although the identification of direct drivers is often fairly straightforward, the underlying drivers are not always obvious, and consensus must be ensured among stakeholders about their nature and impacts.

Country Experience Box 5: Ecuador, Indonesia, and Nepal

- In both Ecuador and Indonesia, significant perverse fiscal incentives were identified that encourage deforestation and forest degradation while not achieving the economic objectives they were designed for, opening the opportunity for "win-win" reforms.
- In Nepal, reaching consensus among stakeholders on key direct drivers was a challenge: each stakeholder group tended to point to others for their role and sought to defend their world views.
- Links between direct and underlying drivers were established through focus groups and field surveys – the results were further discussed in local- and national-level workshops.

Country representatives attended the NS/APs Regional Knowledge Event in Bangkok, Thailand © 2015 UN-REDD Programme

Key Lessons

- The main drivers are usually known, but the challenge may be to reach consensus among different stakeholder groups on both what the direct and underlying drivers are, and their respective importance;
- Underlying drivers are essential to tackle, but frequently neglected; and
- Some incentives designed for stimulating agriculture or other economic sectors are very powerful, but may not be achieving desired results; though it may prove challenging, it is better to try to revise or withdraw these before considering creating new incentives in support of REDD+.

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[3]*The "+ activities" are conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks*

Issue 6: Addressing drivers and barriers requires an appropriate package of coordinated PAMs mixing positive incentives ("carrots") and regulatory measures (monitoring, regulatory frameworks and enforcement: "sticks")

In implementing REDD+, countries may find it useful to consider a mix of both positive incentives and regulatory measures ("carrots" and "sticks"). The most appropriate mix depends on national circumstances and requires careful analysis. Addressing drivers of deforestation requires a comprehensive and coordinated set of various PAMs to be successful. Because many drivers lie outside the forest sector, many appropriate and relevant PAMs need to be designed and implemented by non-forest actors.

Bamboo being floated down a river for processing, Thaungoo District, Myanmar. © 2012 Timothy Boyle

Country Experience Box 6: Brazil

- The Inter-ministerial Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon combines enhanced monitoring and enforcement, land-use planning, and the promotion of sustainable practices, including a revision of economic incentives for sustainable agriculture and forest management, better use of already-cleared lands, and development of sustainable transportation and energy infrastructure.
- Brazil started with actions that could be implemented quickly based on existing resources such as technology for monitoring deforestation and law enforcement, building momentum while working on more complex measures (e.g. conditional access to agricultural credit).
- Public interventions were further enhanced by private sector commitments and actions, such as the "soy moratorium" on forest land cleared after 2006 in the Amazon biome.

Key Lessons

- Positive incentives for more forest-friendly practices may have a low impact without being accompanied by regulatory measures, especially in addressing drivers associated with high-value agricultural commodities. But regulatory measures alone may not be either sufficient nor politically viable in the long run;
- The right balance between carrots and sticks (i.e. positive incentives versus regulation and enforcement) depends on national circumstances, but both are usually needed;
- The correct mix of PAMs depends on an accurate and comprehensive analysis of direct and especially indirect drivers, and a thorough understanding of land-use dynamics; and
- Fiscal incentives, including those having negative impacts on forests, are often provided to influential stakeholders, and may therefore be particularly difficult to modify or withdraw.

A group photo with all country representatives, experts and the organizing team at the NS/APs Regional Knowledge Event in Bangkok, Thailand © 2015 UN-REDD Programme

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